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CONFIDENTIAL.

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F.O.

424

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7294.]

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July to December 1898.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7294.]

No. 1.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 1.)

(No. 2.)

Tabreez, June 16, 1898.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, inclosing a report sent to me by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, Captain Elliot, on the normal state of affairs existing on the Turco-Persian border.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 1.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 1.)

Tabreez, June 16, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Excellency's information, the copy of a report addressed to me by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, Captain Elliot, giving me the result of his observations during his recent incursion into the province under my jurisdiction.

From this communication, your Excellency will perceive that Captain Elliot found few signs of activity among the Armenian revolutionaries on the border, and that the insecurity which exists there is caused rather by the raids and quarrels which are usual at this season among the owners and guardians of the flocks seeking pasturage than by political or racial animosities.

I am, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 1.

Captain Elliot to Consul-General Wood.

Urmi, May 31, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that I have travelled from Tabreez, through Julfa, Maku, Kara-Aine, Var, Salmas, and Baradost, to Urmi.

Nowhere have I seen or heard of any signs of activity on the part of the Armenian revolutionists.

I had heard at Khoi and from Van that they were assembling at the old

Armenian Monastery of Karakilissa, about six hours south of Maku, with a view to attacking the Kurds on the Turkish frontier.

After leaving Maku I visited this monastery, and found that there were no revolutionists there. Last year they had concealed upwards of 100 rifles and ammunition in the village near the monastery, but no one had been there since.

At Salmas there were a few revolutionists, about half-a-dozen, in hiding.

I saw or heard nothing to indicate that the Kurds on the frontier are more than usually restless.

The summer raids have, however, as was to be expected, commenced.

Between Kara-Aine and Zorava I heard that 200 Hamidieh Kurds from Turkey had sacked two villages and killed two men. I got this information from fugitives who were driving off a few sheep that had escaped the observation of the marauders.

All along the border great insecurity appears to exist, and no one will venture far from his village or camp except on the main roads.

In Somai and Baradost, the country of the Shikak Kurds, the Persian Government had sent a force into the hills against Temur Agha. This man, who was recognized by the Government as Chief of the Shikak Kurds, had collected the taxes from the tribes and refused to hand them over, so troops have been sent against him, who are being assisted by the partisans of Kassim Agha the Chief, whom most of the Shikaks recognize.

I saw this "army" in camp, and was told it was 1,000 strong, and had one field gun. It is unlikely that much blood will be shed in this "war," but the Christians and other inoffensive people in the theatre of it will suffer.

I saw the Khan of Maku several times. He is intelligent and well educated, and appears a man of business.

The Kurds in the neighbourhood are afraid of him. I believe he has no sympathies with Armenian revolutionists as such, and does not want to be compromised by them. He is fond of building houses for himself, and is desirous of encouraging Armenians to settle in Maku to work at trades. The Armenians already there do not, I believe, view with favour an arrangement that would cheapen labour. I was told that they started the story of revolutionists hiding in Maku in order to get rid of the refugees from Turkey, about twenty-one families of whom stayed throughout the winter in Maku, and were helped by Swedish missionaries. They were sent away in spring.

The Khan was expecting a visit from M. Minvuski, Russian Vice-Consul at Van, when I arrived. I do not think he has particularly strong Russian sympathies, but as a matter of business he desires to stand well with such neighbours. He and his family are learning Russian.

Permission has been asked on behalf of a charity directed by Dr. Lepsius, of Berlin, to found an orphanage in Maku, and a colony of about thirty families of refugees from Turkey, near Karakilissa.

Everywhere that I travelled in Persia I have found the people, Christian and Moslem, complaining of over-taxation and oppression. They are anxiously expecting a change of some sort, and the first question almost invariably put to my men was whether I had not come to see about the introduction of reforms.

This was one of the points on which M. Hippins, the Russian Vice-Consul, who travelled with me from Khoi to Tabreez, made careful inquiries.

I am, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 2.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 4.)

(No. 381.) *Therapia, June* 30, 1898.

My Lord,

I HAD the honour to report to your Lordship, in my telegram No. 138 of the 27th instant, that the French Chargé d'Affaires had officially informed the Sublime Porte that, unless a satisfactory assurance could be given that the French claims for losses arising out of the massacres would be paid out of the Greek War Indemnity, his Government would help themselves to the amount by taking it from the last instalment of the indemnity before it left Paris.

The total of the French claim, which, I am informed, covers losses in Asia Minor as well as in Constantinople, amounts to 1,050,000 fr., or 42,000*l.*

M. Bapst informs me, confidentially, that, though his Government has adopted his suggestion for recouping themselves out of the war indemnity money, they have slightly altered his plan, which was to seize the amount of the French claims from the French contribution to the last instalment of the indemnity while it was still lying at the Banque de France. Having in view the final paragraph of the collective note of the 6th May, 1898, which states that the last instalment shall be paid "intégralement" and "en tout état de cause" on the 10th July, M. Hanotaux considered that the money could not be seized until it became Turkish money. This change would take place the moment the money was paid by the Banque de France into the Paris branch of the Ottoman Bank.

The payment of the French contribution to the Indemnity Loan would then be complete, the money would belong to the Turkish Government, just as if it lay in the Turkish Treasury at Constantinople, and the French Government would be justified in seizing it in satisfaction of their just claims, which the Ottoman Government chose to ignore.

The French note was followed up by one from the Italian Ambassador, stating that his Government would also be obliged to take steps to recover the amount of the Italian massacre claims unless they received a promise of payment out of the war indemnity.

M. Pansa tells me he has no clear notion of the particular steps which it will be in the power of the Italian Government to take, but that he thought it as well to put in a word.

I myself have merely continued to press for an answer to our claims. The Porte are well aware that Her Majesty's Government have means of recouping themselves, if they choose to employ them as in the matter of the Constantinople Quay dues.

The Foreign Minister told me at my last interview that the French and Italian notes had caused the whole question to be referred once more to the Council of State.

The precise figures of our demands are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
British losses during massacres at Constantinople—			
1st list	17,186	13	0
2nd list..	15,383	8	0
Compensation for murder of British Post Office employé	408	0	0
Registered letter carried by British Post Office employé	2	0	0
Asia Minor claims—			
Mrs. Bezajian	574	0	0
Mr. Gatheral	374	0	0
Total	33,928	1	0

Of the above total 32,978*l.* are claimed in respect of Constantinople, and the remainder in respect of Asia Minor.

The *note verbale* to the Sublime Porte, inclosed in Sir P. Currie's despatch No. 179 of the 24th March, had reference to the first category only, and it was suggested that the claims in that category should be paid out of the Greek War Indemnity.

The claims in our second category do not include the claim of M. Arabian, of Trebizond, amounting to about 90,000*l.*, which has not yet been indorsed by Her Majesty's Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 3.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 11.)

(No. 388.) *Therapia, July* 5, 1898.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 350 of the 15th ultimo, I have the honour to report that Mr. Vice-Consul Monahan has not found in the course of his journey in the Tadvan and Mush districts confirmation of the charges of torturing the inhabitants which had been brought against the Turkish officials.

He reports, however, that the latter are guilty of much unnecessary harshness in conducting the search for arms in the Armenian villages, and that Lieutenant Ali Bey, who has been placed in command of the search party, is openly accused of robbing the villagers.

Mr. Block has, by my direction, called the attention of the Sublime Porte to the methods of investigation employed by Lieutenant Ali Bey and his associates, urging that the charges of pillage and cruelty which have been made against them should be investigated, and the search for arms carried out by more trustworthy officials. Mr. Block added that, according to the information received at Her Majesty's Embassy, the Akhlat district has suffered severely from Kurdish depredations during the last few months, and the gendarmerie have totally failed to hold in check either the Kurds or the revolutionary minority among the Armenians. Under these circumstances, a search for arms was natural enough, and it was right that notorious revolutionary agents should be disarmed. On the other hand, it had been made abundantly clear by the reports received from Her Majesty's Consuls that the bulk of the Armenian population carried arms for defensive purposes, and that, so long as the license indulged in by the Kurds was allowed to continue, it would be unjust to deprive the former of their only means of keeping their assailants in check. A remedy for the present disorders should be sought by adding to the members of the gendarmerie, and insisting on the fulfilment by them of the elementary duty of protecting the lives and property of the inhabitants.

A general disarmament of the inoffensive portion of the Armenian population would only increase the evil.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 4.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 11.)

(No. 391. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 7, 1898.

IN my despatch No. 330, Confidential, of the 2nd ultimo I had the honour to report that Djevad Bey's mission to St. Petersburgh was regarded by his Government as a partial success, in that he claimed to have silenced the Russian demand for the repatriation of the Armenian refugees now in the Caucasus, a demand embarrassing to the Porte, who feared that these returning Armenians might number many revolutionaries among them who would create disturbance by inciting to rebellion their peaceful compatriots in Asia Minor.

According to information, however, which I have received confidentially from a trustworthy source, the satisfaction of the Ottoman Government on this point was premature, since the Russian Government, after a silence of two months, recommenced representations on the subject early in June through their Ambassador here, and stated their intention of expelling at once such of the Armenians as were without visible means of support.

The Ottoman Ambassador at St. Petersburgh was accordingly instructed to demand an audience of the Emperor to explain to His Imperial Majesty the grave danger to Turkey which would result from the execution of the contemplated measure, and to make a personal appeal on behalf of the Sultan for its abandonment.

This demand for an audience, made through M. Chichkine, in the absence of Count Mouravieff, was politely refused on the ground of pressing social and public engagements, and immediately afterwards a Russian vessel laden with Armenian families from the Caucasus appeared before Trebizond.

The Porte, through Husni Pasha at St. Petersburgh, and through the Russian Embassy here, pleaded that the repatriation might at least cease till some decision had been taken as to the disposal of the immigrants.

M. Chichkine expressed the liveliest surprise on hearing of the incident, which, he stated, had taken place without his knowledge or consent, and he promised to make inquiries of the Minister of the Interior and of the Governor-General of the Caucasus.

Count Mouravieff, on his return, proved equally conciliatory, and promised that

the repatriation should cease, adding that he had the intention of suggesting the dispatch of the Armenians to Siberia for employment on the railway works now in progress. The Sultan showed his gratitude for this concession by conferring at once on his Excellency the Order of the Medjidié in brilliants, and on M. Chichkine the first class of the Osmanié.

Unfortunately for the Porte, the Russian Minister of the Interior declared the Siberian scheme to be impracticable, and Husni Pasha was instructed to propose as a solution the payment by the Porte to the Armenians of a sum of money on condition of their promising, on leaving Russian territory, not to return to Turkish soil, but to establish themselves elsewhere. Before this transaction could be completed a new band of 800 Armenians arrived in Turkey by land, and the Porte learned that 15,000 more would follow shortly. The total number of Armenians whose expulsion is contemplated by the Russian Government is variously stated as between 30,000 and 60,000.

Meanwhile, M. Zinovieff, who had apparently been kept in ignorance of the negotiations carried on at St. Petersburgh, continued to press the Porte for an immediate decision on the subject. Count Mouravieff accounted for the commencement of the exodus, of which he said he was unaware, by stating that no reply had yet been received from the Governor-General of the Caucasus, and that M. Zinovieff had been acting upon previous instructions.

His Excellency addressed a somewhat severe telegram to his Ambassador, which he even communicated to Husni Pasha, in which he explained the state of the case, and expressed himself "au plus haut point surpris du malentendu survenu à la suite des communications de Husni Pacha."

Not the least interesting feature of the affair is the effect it has produced on the relations between M. Zinovieff and his chief, which have been severely strained for many months past.

It appears that the Ambassador, on learning of the negotiations which had been carried on behind his back for a whole month, and which completely stultified the representations made by him here in pursuance of his instructions, telegraphed to Count Mouravieff to say that such proceedings tended to render his position impossible by making him ridiculous in the eyes of the Porte, and added that if a similar policy were pursued in the future no course would be open to him but to tender his resignation.

I understand that his anger has since been appeased, but I have not heard that any decision has been taken with regard to the disposal of the Armenians, or that the Decree of Expulsion published by the Russian Government early last May has been rescinded.

The provisions of this Decree have already been communicated to your Lordship by Her Majesty's Consul at Batoum in his despatch No. 13 of the 25th May.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 5.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 11.)

(No. 393.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 7, 1898.

IN my despatch No. 325 of the 21st May, I reported the steps taken by this Embassy in order to cause the Vali of Sivas to be called to account for his conduct in the matter of the abduction of Armenian girls and their forced conversion to Islamism, for which that province has become so notorious.

I regret to state that the instructions sent to the Vali on Mr. Block's representations have produced, as yet, no perceptible effect. The two further despatches from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, transmitted herewith, will show that, although abundant evidence proving that force was used in these cases has been brought before the Court of Appeal, the Vali, without waiting for the decision of the Court, has obtained from the Administrative Council of his province, which has not heard the evidence, a formal document declaring that the abductions and conversions were willingly acquiesced in by the women, and has sent this document to the Ministry of the Interior.

Mr. Block has again spoken strongly to the Minister of the Interior, pointing out that the Vali's action in the whole of this case has been highly reprehensible, and that he should be severely reprimanded, if not removed from his post. He held similar language to the Foreign Minister and Grand Vizier, and he learns that the Vali's conduct has been the subject of some unfavourable discussion in the Council of State, and that the Minister of the Interior is in communication with the Minister of Justice with regard to the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 5.

Captain Maunsell to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 41.) *Sivas, June 12, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the Vali is engaged in collecting signatures from Armenians and others saying what an excellent Governor he is, &c., so that doubtless he is afraid of some action at Constantinople.

As already stated in my despatch No. 38 of the 25th May last, the discontent against the Vali is general.

A small syndicate, composed of the Vali, the Nazir of the Public Debt, Mehmed Bey, the Cadi, and the Military Commandant, practically have the Government in their hands, collecting all the money they can, and abandoning all idea of justice.

The Procureur-Général, after sending forward a formal protest, has been removed to Kharput at his own request. I could quote many specific instances of injustice which I heard here and on my journey recently to Azizie.

The forcible abduction of Armenian girls is not strictly a religious question, but they are carried off and handed over to rich Notables of Sivas and elsewhere in a condition of white slavery to propitiate these men and make them keep their mouths shut.

The abductors of the girls at Chepni, seven in number, were at first placed in prison at Charkishla, but have now been released without the case going before any Court at all. I have brought this to the notice of the Vali, but he has done nothing.

In the case of the abduction at Yarhissar, I managed to procure a retrial after the men had been released. The sittings of the Court have been attended by my Dragoman, and clear evidence, Moslem and Armenian, has been produced of force having been used.

Two Inspectors of Justice, under scheme of reform, Asim Bey and Aframaki Effendi (Adlie Mufettishi), have just arrived here, and I propose bringing to their notice the release without trial of the abductors of Chepni.

Another case of injustice is in the Armenian village of Ulash, where a certain rich Karapapak of the neighbourhood has been allowed to settle on the villagers' lands, build a farm, and instal himself without any attempt at compensation.

The summer grazing ground of the Circassian village of Alti Kezek, although occupied for thirty-five years by them, has been sold to a rich merchant of Urfa without compensation.

I could enumerate other similar instances.

On receipt of your Excellency's telegram of the 1st instant, I went to see the Vali on the subject of the forced conversions, but he had not changed his attitude in the slightest, and I can only conclude that he had received no definite instructions from Constantinople. He has abandoned the idea of returning the girl now at Charkishla to her village at Chepni, but intends to get her and the other girl from Yarhissar married to Turks.

One unfortunate woman has two children by her Armenian husband.

I would suggest to your Excellency, if the question of replacing this Vali should arise, that Bekir Pasha, the present Mutessarif of Tokat, is very desirous of the post of Vali here, and would be a most suitable man for it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

Inclosure 2 in No. 5.

Captain Maunsell to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 43.) *Sivas, June 15, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, in continuation of my despatch No. 41 of the 12th instant, a further sitting of the Court of Appeal regarding the trial of the abductors at Yarhissar has taken place. The Vali has constantly maintained, regarding these abductions, that they were not forcible, and that the conversions were perfectly voluntary.

Your Excellency will see from my previous despatches that it is perfectly clear that the conversions were obtained solely by terrorizing these unfortunate women. The trial in the Court of Appeal as regards Yarhissar has been accumulating clear evidence to show that force was used, and the Vali sees that if the evidence is properly considered the abductors will be convicted and punished. This would completely upset his theories, so, to prevent a conviction, he has now obtained a mazbata from the Administrative Council ("Idare Mejlis") of the vilayet, saying that, in their opinion, the abductions were not forcible.

This has been forwarded to the Minister of the Interior.

As these persons have not heard the evidence, and would sign anything the Vali chose to put in front of them, their opinion is not worth much. I have laid before the Inspectors of Justice the case of the other abductors at Chepni, and they have taken the matter up, and I hope will shortly bring these men to trial also.

The Petition mentioned in the first part of my despatch No. 41 of the 12th June was sent by telegraph direct to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 6.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July 11.*)

(No. 395.) *Therapia, July 7, 1898.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No 334 of the 7th June, I have the honour to transmit a further report from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van on the condition of his district.

Captain Elliot states that a number of political prisoners have been already released at Van, and that the remainder will probably gain their liberty in a short time.

Hussein Pasha, the exiled Kurdish Chief, has been allowed to return to his country, as well as his two companions in exile, whose restoration to favour was reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 364 of the 21st June. Mr. Consul Graves informs me from Erzeroum that this arch brigand and murderer has been promoted to the full rank of a Colonel in the Hamidieh cavalry. It is probable that the Sultan is endeavouring in this way to establish some control over the Kurds, whom he is unable to keep under by repressive measures.

Captain Elliot deals also with the return of the refugee Armenians from beyond the Russian frontier, and with the increasing tendency which is noticeable in the Nestorian Church to seek refuge in the fold of more powerful religious denominations.

The new Vali of Van appears to have established a kind of understanding with Zekki Pasha, the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Captain Elliot to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 22.)

Sir, *Van, June* 22, 1893.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following summary of the situation here:—

Out of the thirty-four Armenians who were under trial on political charges twenty-three have been released within the past few weeks. Many of these men had been nearly nine months in prison.

There are a large number of others, notably those sentenced at Bashkala, still in prison. It is believed that all will shortly be released.

It is said that the Kurds are being made to pay taxes, but arrears are not at present being pressed for.

The three Kurds whose exile was so eminently desirable, viz., Haji Temir, Emin, and Hosein Pashas, have returned rewarded from Constantinople within the last few days.

This can only be regarded as an instance of the deliberate bad faith of the Porte.

I cannot, in the face of this fact, and of what appears to me a general intention of condoning past misbehaviour on the part of the Kurds, provided they create no disturbance for the moment, entertain much hope of permanent improvement in the future.

The sacking of two Armenian villages near Baskhala, where several people were killed by Kurds of Sheref Bey, and the reports of outrages by Kurds in the Bitlis Vilayet, just come to hand, confirm this view.

All Armenian refugees from Turkey are being turned out of Russia, apparently whether they are able to earn their livelihood or not, and are beginning to arrive here. A party of these men, who had saved some money in Russia, were completely cleaned out by Kurds on the Abagha Plain a few days ago. These refugees are being turned adrift in Turkey with a grant of 10 roubles each from the Russian Government.

Even if the means were forthcoming to supply them at once with cattle and seed and help them to rebuild their villages, it is now too late to sow for this year's harvest. Their presence will thus increase the existing distress. The price of wheat is now 60 piastres a chap instead of about 40.

The bazaar appears better stocked than last year, but business is not brisk.

Latterly the Dominican priests in Van have succeeded in making a considerable number of converts. Several Armenian and Nestorian villages have become Roman Catholic with their priests as well as an Armenian quarter in Van gardens. The Dominicans intend to purchase property here and greatly extend their operations.

There is still a great deal of distress in the country, and the Dominican Fathers have apparently had considerable sums at their disposal to distribute in relief. I am not prepared to state positively, as is asserted by the people here, that the receipt of this relief depended on the recipient adopting the Roman Catholic faith.

As regards the wholesale conversion of Nestorians, and I understand more may shortly be expected, it appears that this is a question where Russian and French views may shortly be at variance.

The Russian Consul has lately made a tour of the frontier from Bashkala to Maku. He appears to have made a point of visiting Nestorian villages, and making inquiries of the people whether they had become Roman Catholic or not.

The Turks seem to be convinced that Russia means shortly to attack them, and the usual threats against all infidels have been uttered.

As an evidence of the bad feeling existing in certain quarters, I may mention a case that came to my notice where a Colonel abused and threatened in filthy terms a sentry whom he had seen present arms to the Muavin.

It is too early for me yet to pronounce an opinion on the Vali, Tahir Pasha. The people, so far, speak well of him. He is evidently a man of experience and ability. His manners are agreeable, and he converses without reserve on matters of business. My impression, however, is that, if he got the cue from Constantinople to be obstructive, he would be very difficult to deal with. He seems to have established a *modus vivendi* with Zekki Pasha, the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps; whether because he has had orders to do so or not is not clear.

It is said that a General Officer is coming out to take command of the Hamidieh,

No. 9*.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 101.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, July* 16, 1898, 2·45 P.M.

HER Majesty's Government have had under their consideration your telegram No. 144 of the 13th instant, in which you suggest that you should inform British claimants for compensation for losses suffered during the riots of 1896 that they will be paid out of the Cyprus tribute. It will be better to make no allusion to the Cyprus tribute, but you may state that Her Majesty's Government will use their best endeavours to obtain for British claims treatment as favourable as that accorded to those put forward by nationals of other countries.

and that he is to have two squadrons of regular cavalry under his orders for police purposes.

It appears of great importance that the authors of the recent outrages on Armenians near Bashkala and Bitlis should be dealt with in an uncompromising manner.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 7.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 155.) *Foreign Office, July* 12, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE received your despatch No. 350 of the 15th ultimo, and I approve of your having authorized Her Majesty's Consul at Bitlis to go to Mush for the purpose of inquiring into the distribution of relief to Armenians.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 8.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 13.)

(No. 144.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July* 13, 1898, 12·15 P.M.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 381 of the 30th ultimo respecting the claims of British subjects to indemnity for losses sustained during the massacres, I have the honour to state that information has reached me that the Italian Government proposes to act in the same way as the French Government in respect of their claims by laying an embargo on certain sums in the Ottoman Bank in Paris.

The Sultan still declines to admit his liability in the matter, and I shall be glad if your Lordship would authorize me to inform British claimants who have once more begun to press for the settlement of their demands, that they shall be paid from the Cyprus tribute in the event of the final refusal of the Ottoman Government to consider the question.

No. 9.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 145.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July* 14, 1898, 11·20 A.M.

MASSACRE claims.

With reference to my telegram No. 138 of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to state that the total amount embargoed at the Paris branch of the Ottoman Bank is 1,000,000 fr.; of this sum 400,000 fr. are held back on behalf of the Italian Government.

No. 10.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 401.) *Constantinople, July* 12, 1898.

My Lord,

I INFORMED your Lordship in my despatch No. 388 of the 6th instant, that I had been led by Mr. Vice-Consul Monahan's reports to make representations at the Porte with regard to the manner in which the search for arms was being conducted in the Mush and Tadvan districts.

In reply to inquiries instituted by the Porte, the Vali of Bitlis has reported that the

apprehensions of the Armenians arose from the dispatch of a body of Zaptiehs in pursuit of a band of Armenian brigands. Some of the latter were caught, and their arms and munitions seized, together with a seal and papers proving the connection of the band with an Armenian revolutionary committee.

The Vali states that Ali Bey, accused of cruelty by the Armenian population, is a brave and upright officer. The complaints made by the villagers are described as purely imaginery.

I am sending the substance of the Vali's reply to Mr. Monahan, who is stated by the Vali to have changed his view of the affair on hearing the official explanation.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

P.S.—I have just received a despatch from Mr. Monahan, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy.

M. DE B.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 10.)

Sir, *Bitlis, June 27, 1898.*

WITH reference to my telegrams Nos. 43, 44, and 45, the following is a summary of my information as to recent events in the Caza of Akhlat and the two Christian villages of Shamiram and Tadvan adjoining that caza.

In the first ten days of June, Hassanali Kurds took thirty oxen from Sorgonk, twenty from Perkhus, a large number from Goshtian, sixty from Garmuni; attacked with the object of cattle-lifting, Arkansor, the residence of the Akhlat Kaimakam, a ward of Akhlat town, and killed the Kaimakam's horse under him. All the villages mentioned except Arkansor, are Christian villages of Akhlat.

In the first days of June Ali Bey, Circassian Lieutenant of gendarmes, with about twenty men, accompanied by the notorious Moussa Bey's brother, Ibrahim Bey, who, according to the Vali's improbable story, held no commission from the Government, and was accidentally present, entered the villages Tadvan, Kidzvag, Shamiram, and Cherkhor, to search for the revolutionist Serop, who is certainly often in Akhlat Caza and its neighbourhood. There is probably not a Christian house in the caza, or in Tadvan or Shamiram, of which at least one man has not been terrorized by him into having his name written down in a list of revolutionists. He comes over from time to time from Van or Russia. His band now is supposed to include the escaped prisoners (see my despatch No. 35 of 20th April last), and perhaps in its full strength numbers forty. The Vali imputes to him every sort of crime, including the murder of the Bitlis Chief of Police.

A man of Tadvan says he was tortured by Ibrahim Bey's men seizing his testicles between two sticks and twisting them round till he fainted. He says his parts were covered by his drawers when the torture was inflicted. His person, which I examined yesterday, showed no mark, but he said he had become impotent. I told him to go to a certain doctor, but I found to-day that he never went. I will report further about him.

The priest of Tadvan, according to apparently overwhelming testimony, was badly beaten by the same men, and was in consequence ill in bed for some weeks. He is, I understand, almost well now.

From Kidzvag came the terrible report that twenty-five men had been tortured a day or two later, in the same way as the Tadvan man, by Ibrahim Bey and Ali Bey and their men.

I spent an hour in Kidzvag on June 23rd. The alleged twenty-five victims had all disappeared. Twenty-four are dispersed in different villages. One is in Bitlis. The skin under the testicles was, it seems, nipped and broken between two sticks, but is now nearly healed. He has no fear of any permanent injury. The twenty-four others were tortured similarly, but more slightly. Their skins were not broken, and they are said to be quite well now.

I have not had an opportunity of examining any of the twenty-five, but the evidence in support of the above story again seems overwhelming.

Ibrahim Bey left the searching party on or about 10th June, and, after the visit to Kidzvag, no more of this kind of torture is alleged to have occurred.

There was certainly, however, much beating in different villages, and probably some robbery and violating of women.

I saw Ali Bey for about five minutes, conducting an examination in the Akhlat village Zigag, and certainly I never saw more quiet and more civilized-looking proceedings. But I thought it useless to stay longer.

I have continually endeavoured to persuade the people who complain of these outrages to address their complaints in a regular manner to the Vali. But it seems quite useless. They, one and all, absolutely refuse to do so; nor can I blame them.

The Vali, of course, denies everything, and I can only urge to his Excellency the danger to his Government that may result from a continuance of such violent proceedings.

A man is said to have died of his beating, three days after its infliction, about four weeks ago, in Dapavank. The evidence of this, especially that adduced by the American missionaries Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Andrews, who passed through that village a fortnight ago, is strong. In the night which they spent in the village 180 sheep were carried off from it by Kurds.

It was alleged that a man of Perkhus was beaten to death a week ago. The Vali sent the municipal doctor of Bitlis, who certified that death was due to consumption and liver complaint, and that there were no marks of beating.

On several occasions within the last two years gendarmes could have caught or at least attacked Serop and his band, but shirked the duty. It is probable that these unpaid gendarmes are not far from mutiny, and they say themselves that they will not fight a desperate man at the risk of leaving their own families to starve.

However serious efforts are apparently now being made to catch Serop, about whom the latest report is that he has escaped to the Sassoon mountains.

The fruits of the rigorous search, so far, have been eight Russian rifles found in villages, where Serop had left them for the day of rising, and about fifty Armenian prisoners now lodged in Bitlis jail.

Thirty Armenian villagers from one village, Zigag, alone, have fled to Russia. The illicit emigration of Akhlat villagers to Russia has been continual during the last three years.

The state of this once rich caza seems, from a very cursory inspection, wretched. The lake-side villagers, have, on account of the cattle-lifting by Kurds, abandoned the more fertile fields, which lie on the slope of Mount Nimrod; and the terror in which they live, of the Government, on the one hand and of Serop on the other, is extreme.

If the Government took some such wise conciliatory step as the immediate arrest of Ibrahim Bey without waiting for a petition, some good might be done.

To-day I learn that the Protestant preacher of Zigag is about to petition the Vali, complaining of Ali Bey's gendarmes having robbed his house last week.

Some Zigag villagers, who alleged that they were kicked and beaten by the same Zaptiehs, one of them displaying five marks on his face from a gendarme's boot, also express the intention, which I trust they will carry out, of complaining to the Vali without delay.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 11.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 402.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, July 14, 1898.*

IN two despatches dated the 11th and 15th June, with copies of which I need not trouble your Lordship, Mr. Consul Devey reports the outbreak of an insurrection in the Yemen, and states that between 5,000 and 6,000 Ottoman troops have been sent to repress it. He draws a comparison between the present rising and that which occurred in 1892. The latter was promptly suppressed by the Turkish forces, but in the present case the local Arabs are much better supplied with arms of precision, which are freely imported, it is said from Massowah. No sympathy with the insurgents is apparent in the Hedjaz, where a difference of sect is a sufficient cause of estrangement from the kindred inhabitants of the neighbouring province. But a triumph of the Yemen Arabs would be speedily felt in the Hedjaz, and the disturbed state of the

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caravan roads between Mecca and Jeddah, and between Medina and Yembo is an ominous symptom.

The new Vali of the Yemen, Husain Hilmi Bey, arrived at Hodeida on the 28th May.

I have had the honour to report to your Lordship a few later details in my despatches Nos. 372 and 385 of the 23rd ultimo and the 4th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 12.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 401.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 14, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 381 of the 30th June, I have the honour to report that the claims of the various Embassies, on account of losses caused by the massacres, have formed the subject of protracted deliberations at the Palace during the last few weeks. I learn that the Porte's determination to repudiate all liability remains unshaken.

There is little prospect that the Sultan will ever consent to the payment or even to the investigation of these claims which are founded upon the assumption that the massacres were deliberately planned and executed under His Majesty's orders or, at least, with his connivance and approval.

Under these circumstances the French Government, as your Lordship is aware, is taking steps to recover the amount of its claim by means of an embargo upon the moneys recently paid into the Paris branch of the Ottoman Bank on account of the last instalment of the Greek war indemnity.

An official injunction, I understand, has been sent to the bank by the French Foreign Office requiring the bank to hold back the sum of 1,200,000 fr. This injunction is to be followed up by a sequester drawn up in due form and presented by a "huissier." Subsequently a formal Judgment will have to be obtained in the Civil Court of the Department of the Seine. It is expected that the defendant, that is, the Ottoman Government, will decline to recognize the authority of the French Court in the matter, and that Judgment will be pronounced by default in favour of the French Government.

I am informed that the Italian Government is likewise endeavouring to obtain a Judgment in a French Court which will cause the Paris branch of the Ottoman Bank to hold back the sum claimed by Italy.

The legality of these proceedings is disputed by the Ottoman Government, which affects to believe that nothing will come of them.

However this may be, the Porte will protest against such methods of settling an international dispute.

It is, of course, conceivable that the Sultan would prefer a forcible settlement of this kind to one resting upon his own consent and implying an acknowledgment of the charges brought against him.

I am informed that the desire of the French Government to reassert its ancient Protectorate over the Roman Catholic communities in the Turkish Empire is largely responsible for the energetic attitude which it has taken up in this matter. The strides made by Russia in obtaining control of the Greek schools in Syria and Asia Minor, and the rapid growth of the German Colonies at Haifa and Jaffa, have seriously impaired French prestige in those regions. The rebuilding of the ruined schools, churches, and orphanages under French auspices and with money extorted by France from Turkey would go some way to restoring France to her former position. No less than four-fifths of her total claim is for damages inflicted upon this kind of property.

In my telegram No. 144 of yesterday's date I ventured to inquire whether your Lordship would authorize me to tell the British claimants that, in the event of a final refusal of the Porte to entertain their claims, they would receive payment out of the Cyprus tribute.

This course was taken in the case of another set of British claims arising out of the quay dues illegally levied at Constantinople, in respect of which the Ottoman Government was equally disinclined to give ear to our demands.

Messrs. Macnamara and Bond, representing the British claimants at Constantinople, called a few days ago to renew the request for an early settlement.

They were induced to do so by the action now being taken by France and Italy. I told them that it would be well to wait until the Greek war indemnity, out of which we had asked the Porte to repay our claims, had been fully paid up.

This has now been done. The Porte makes no sign of meeting our demands, and it would seem that the time has come to consider how they shall be enforced.

Your Lordship is aware that our Constantinople claims, as already checked and verified, amount to £ T. 32,980, including a claim of £ T. 2 for a lost registered letter, and our Asia Minor claims to £ T. 945, exclusive of the £ T. 33,012 now claimed by Mr. Arabian, as stated in my preceding despatch.

Your Lordship will doubtless consider that Mr. Arabian's claim demands further examination before it can be fairly included in the list of those which, like the British Constantinople claims and the claims of MM. Boyadjian and Gatheral for Asia Minor, have been already considerably reduced from their original figures. It is in respect of these latter claims only that I am now soliciting your Lordship's instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 13.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 405.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 14, 1898.*

WITH reference to Sir P. Currie's despatch No. 302 of the 19th May, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that Mr. Monahan, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reports that eighteen prisoners, of whom two are Mussulmans and the rest Armenians, were sent to Erzeroum on the 5th July, to be tried there for complicity in the murder of the Bitlis Chief of Police.

Thomas Effendi, an Armenian officer of Police, and his brother, a policeman, were amongst the prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 14.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 202.)
My Lord, *St. Petersburgh, July 13, 1898.*

BEING unable to attend Count Mouravieff's weekly reception to-day owing to the presence at luncheon at the Embassy of the Grand Duke Vladimir and the Grand Duchess Marie Pavlowna, I proposed calling to-morrow to take leave and to present Mr. Goschen as Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

About 6 o'clock, however, I received a message from his Excellency saying that he was obliged to go out of town to-morrow for a couple of days, and that as he might not be back before I left on Saturday, he hoped I would call at any time that suited me this evening.

I did so at once, and found his Excellency anxious to talk to me of the importance of establishing close commercial relations between England and Russia as the best means of preparing the ground for a political understanding.

I need not trouble your Lordship by repeating what he said, as it was merely the echo of M. Witte's remarks last night, and he was evidently speaking to me in order to please his powerful colleague. I could not, however, help observing that he laid more stress upon the importance of close commercial than of friendly political relations, although the latter were directly under his office.

I subsequently tried to find out from him whether he was really determined to insist upon the candidature of Prince George, but I could not get further than a "yes" and "no," so I dropped the subject.

I then said that I thought there were many ways in which we could assist each other at Constantinople by merely working on the principle of mutual reciprocity.

His Excellency said that if I wanted Russian co-operation in any question he thought the best plan would be to explain frankly what was wanted, and, if it did not seem counter to French or Russian interests, I could reckon upon the assistance of Russia.

I said that upon one thing I did count and that was that if there should be any danger of a repetition of outrages such as the Armenian massacres, the Russian Government would not hesitate to join heartily with Her Majesty's Government in taking steps to prevent it. His Excellency said that a repetition of such atrocities could not be tolerated.

After mentioning that Mr. Goschen, who was unfortunately prevented from being present owing to the short notice of his wish to see me to-day, would remain in charge of Her Majesty's Embassy until Sir Charles Scott arrived, I took leave of his Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 15.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—Received July 19.)

(No. 147.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July 19, 1898, 11·15 A.M.*

MASSACRE claims.

I learn from the French Chargé d'Affaires that the Sublime Porte have addressed to him a note in which all pecuniary liability on account of the massacres is repudiated. The Turkish Government throw the blame of those "disturbances" on foreigners, by whom, as they assert, the Armenian revolutionists were encouraged, and they draw attention to their own moderation in not claiming compensation from foreigners for the injuries inflicted on Mussulmans during the massacres.

No. 16.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 19.)

(No. 150.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July 19, 1898, 2·20 P.M.*

MASSACRE claims.

I have just received a note from the Sublime Porte similar in sense to that addressed to the French Embassy, the substance of which I communicated to your Lordship in my telegram No. 147. Tewfik Pasha states that the authorities made every effort to repress the disturbances, and that, to a great extent, those efforts were attended by success. He urges that Governments of other countries are not liable to claims for damages when similar riots occur. He maintains that the Ottoman Government can accept no responsibility in the matter, and declines to entertain the suggestion that the Greek Loan indemnity should be applied to this purpose.

No. 17.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen

(No. 160.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 22, 1898.*

I HAVE received your despatches Nos. 339 and 349 of the 9th and 15th ultimo, relative to the claim presented to the Porte for repayment of the sum belonging to the Armenian Relief Committee which was in the possession of Yusuf Yuman at the time of his murder, and which has not since been recovered.

It is stated by the Porte that the unrecovered balance is only 20,177½ piastres, or about 200*l.*, instead of £ T. 346, as affirmed by the Relief Committee; that it is the business of those concerned to bring a civil action against the murderers or their family, and prove that this money is, or has been, in the possession of the latter, and

that, in the absence of evidence to that effect, the authorities are not called upon to take further action.

But the note from the Sublime Porte ignores the fact that evidence has been communicated by Her Majesty's Embassy to the effect that two of the local Turkish officials, the Mutessarif and Public Prosecutor of Sairt, used threatening language to Yusuf Yuman for the purpose of extorting from him a portion of the money in his hands, and that his murder followed shortly on his continued refusal to agree to this demand.

It is stated in your despatch No. 339 that the Vali of the province has been called upon, by telegraph, for a Report on the subject, and has replied that the allegations made in this letter have not been substantiated.

This, however, cannot be accepted by Her Majesty's Government as satisfactorily disposing of the matter. They consider that the evidence of the letter in question, which induces grave suspicion that these officials were implicated in the crime, cannot be considered as rebutted without a formal and searching inquiry, and until the charge of complicity of Turkish officials in the murder is disproved, Her Majesty's Government must hold the Porte responsible for the money which has disappeared.

You will address a representation to the Turkish Government to this effect.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 18.

Foreign Office to the Law Officers of the Crown.

Foreign Office, July 23, 1898.

Gentlemen,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you, by direction of the Marquess of Salisbury, the Papers noted in the accompanying list,* which refer to the claim of Messrs. Arabian against the Turkish Government for losses sustained by them during the disturbances in Anatolia in 1895.

On the 25th September of that year Messrs. Arabian submitted to this Department a claim for 91,123*l.* in respect of loss incurred at Trebizond and other towns of Asia Minor (Paper B). M. Maurice Arabian's claim to British nationality having previously been established in connection with another matter (See Paper A), Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople was instructed to inquire into this case and endeavour to obtain some evidence in support of the claims to compensation advanced by Messrs. Arabian.

In February last a despatch was received from Sir P. Currie (Paper C), forwarding a report on the case from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, together with three documents produced by Messrs. Arabian as substantiating their claim in respect of their losses at Trebizond alone, which they estimated at 22,043*l.*

This part of their claim Messrs. Arabian wished Her Majesty's Embassy to present separately to the Turkish Government, but it was thought advisable to consider the claims in their entirety, and the firm were therefore asked to produce evidence with regard to their losses at places other than Trebizond (Paper E). It will be seen from a recent despatch received from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires (Paper F), that in view of this request, Messrs. Arabian have withdrawn the greater part of their claims owing to the impossibility of producing documentary proof of their losses, and they now advance, with certain papers in evidence, a claim for losses at Gurun only, which they estimate at £ T. 10,980, in addition to that for losses at Trebizond, making a total claim of 30,010*l.*

I am to request that you will take the Papers transmitted herewith into your consideration, and that you will favour Lord Salisbury with your opinion as to whether Messrs. Arabian's claim, or any part of it only (and if so, which part) is in law sustainable and proper to be put forward by Her Majesty's Government, subject to a final examination of details, items, and amounts, and I am also to request that you will favour his Lordship with any general observations which you may have to offer on the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

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* Not printed.

No. 19

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July 25.*)

(No. 415.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 21, 1898.*

IN my despatch No. 391 of the 7th instant, I gave some account of the negotiations between this country and Russia with regard to the demand made by the latter for the return to Asia Minor of the Armenian refugees in the Caucasus, whom the Russian Government desire to send back to their homes.

The Porte is struggling hard to induce the Russian Government to withdraw their demand, but, in reply to repeated representations at St. Petersburgh, they are informed that Count Mouravieff has placed the matter in the hands of M. Zinovieff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, and that arrangements must be made with the latter.

M. Zinovieff again addressed a strong note to the Porte on the 18th instant, insisting on the repatriation of the refugees on Turkish territory, and I learn that the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs has been given to understand, by means of a verbal intimation through the Russian first Dragoman, that, if Turkey remains obdurate and declines to make proper arrangement for the reinstatement of the Armenians from the Caucasus, Russia will reopen the entire Armenian question by inviting England and France to join her in securing proper treatment for the refugees, and in insisting on the adoption of the necessary reforms in Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 20.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 163.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 25, 1898.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 388 of the 5th instant, reporting that you have called the attention of the Sublime Porte to the unnecessary harshness employed by Turkish officials in conducting the search for arms in Armenian villages of the Tadvan and Mush districts.

The representations made by you have the approval of Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 21.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 1.*)

(No. 419.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 27, 1898.*

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis reports an encounter between Armenian revolutionists and gendarmes at Tadvan.

It appears that the revolutionists, who were together in a house, were attacked by the gendarmes on the evening of the 24th instant, and that the siege lasted till the following morning, when the house was set on fire and burnt down.

Four of the revolutionists were killed, including one of the persons accused of the murder of the Bitlis Chief of Police. The fifth is supposed to have escaped. Of the gendarmes, one was killed and one wounded.

A Kurd was also wounded, and an Armenian villager killed, probably unintentionally, by the revolutionists, who were armed with Russian rifles of military pattern.

Mr. Monahan adds that no further disturbance is apprehended.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 22.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 1.*)

(No. 423.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 28, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 385 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that I learn on good authority that the reinforcements for the Yemen have now arrived, bringing up the strength of the Ottoman forces in that province to forty-eight battalions of infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, and nine batteries of artillery (two mountain).

The communications between Sanaa and the coast are said to be still open, and military operations have been suspended for the present, but the insurrection is far from quelled, and the rebel Sheikhs are endeavouring to gain popularity by distributing corn in the famine districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 23.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 8.*)

(No. 424.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 20, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 393 of the 7th instant, I have the satisfaction of transmitting copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, reporting that the representations made by Her Majesty's Embassy at the Sublime Porte respecting the forced conversion and abduction of Armenian girls in the Vilayet of Sivas, have produced some effect, and that good progress is being made in restoring these women to their homes.

In another despatch Captain Maunsell states that the general attitude of the Vali has improved of late.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Captain Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 50.)
Sir, *Sivas, July 20, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency, in reply to the inclosed Memorandum,* that the representations made to the Sublime Porte have had the desired effect. As already reported, one of the Armenian women abducted from Chepni has been safely restored to her religion, her husband, and her children. This has had a very good effect on the Christian population.

As regards the second woman abducted at Chepni, and detained in the house of Kara Osman there, I have received a communication from that village stating that she also will declare that she wishes to return to Christianism and her husband.

The Vali yesterday ordered the Kaimakam of Charkishla to go to Chepni, and I expect the matter will shortly be arranged.

With regard to the girl abducted from Yarhissar, I am endeavouring to arrange that her mother shall go to see her, and hope that she also will be restored.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. B. MAUNSELL.

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* Mr. Block, No. 215.

No. 24.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 8.)

(No. 430. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 2, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 423 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report to your Lordship the following particulars respecting the present situation in the Yemen, for which I am indebted to the Turkish Minister of War.

It appears from various telegrams recently received by his Excellency that the Taz Road, the neighbourhood of Hodeida, Sanaa, and the whole Caza of Eniz have been completely freed from insurgents, though some still remain in the district of Gherfil. The insurgents, who numbered about 2,500, suffered severely in the encounters which have taken place, while the Imperial troops lost only eight men. The troops now in the vilayet amount, according to Riza Pasha, to fifty battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and six batteries of artillery, of which two are provided with 7·5″ calibre guns.

The newly-appointed Vali, Hussein Hilmi Bey, and the Mushir, Abdullah Pasha, together with all the members of the Special Commission sent by the Sultan to assimilate the Administration of the Yemen Vilayet to that of other provinces, are at Sanaa, and all Government officials have already returned to their posts.

Riza Pasha attributes the revolt partly to religious feeling and partly to famine, and states that an immense quantity of flour, rice, butter, and barley have already been dispatched to the district by his Department to relieve the distressed population.

His Excellency appeared perfectly confident of being able to suppress any future revolt in the Yemen with the force now at his disposal for the purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 25

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 6.)

(No. 132.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 2, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of a note which I have this day addressed to the Ottoman Foreign Minister, as directed by your Lordship's despatch No. 160 of the 22nd ultimo, on the subject of the claim arising out of the murder and robbery of Youssouf Yunan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Mr. de Bunsen to Tewfik Pasha.

M. le Ministre, *Constantinople, August 2, 1898.*

I DID not fail to forward to Her Majesty's Government the *pro-memorid* of the Sublime Porte of the 12th June last on the subject of the claim which had been presented by Her Majesty's Embassy in respect of the murder and robbery of Youssouf Yunan, an agent of the British Relief Committee.

In that communication it is stated by the Sublime Porte that the unreceived balance of the relief money which was in the possession of Youssouf Yunan at the time of his murder is only 20,177½ piastres, instead of 31,000 piastres, as affirmed by the Relief Committee; that it is the business of those concerned to bring a civil action against the murderers or their family and prove that this money is or has been in the possession of the latter, and that, in the absence of evidence to that effect, the authorities are not called upon to take further action.

The *note verbale* in question has received the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and I am instructed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to make the following observations in reply to it:—

In stating that recourse should have been had to a civil action, the Sublime Porte appears to have ignored the fact that evidence has been communicated to Her Majesty's

Embassy to the effect that two of the local Ottoman officials, the Mutessarif and Public Prosecutor of Sairt, used threatening language to Youssouf Yunan for the purpose of extorting from him a portion of the money in his hands, and that his murder followed shortly on his continued refusal to agree to this demand.

The letter containing the above charges was communicated to His Highness the Grand Vizier in a *pro-memorid*, dated the 14th April, and the First Dragoman of Her Majesty's Embassy has since been verbally informed at the Sublime Porte that the Vali of Bitlis, who had been called upon, by telegraph, for a report on the subject, had replied that the allegations made in the letter had not been substantiated.

This, however, cannot be accepted by Her Majesty's Government as satisfactorily disposing of the matter. They consider that the evidence of the letter in question, which induces grave suspicion that the above-mentioned officials were implicated in the crime, cannot be regarded as rebutted without a formal and searching inquiry, and until the charge of complicity of Ottoman officials in the murder is disproved, Her Majesty's Government must hold the Sublime Porte responsible for the money which has disappeared.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 26.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 8.)

(No. 435. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 3, 1898.*

I HAD the honour to report to your Lordship in my telegram No. 151, Confidential, the purport of the suggestion made to me in conversation by Dr. Kurt Zander, Director of the Anatolian Railway, with regard to an amalgamation of the German and English railway interests in Asia Minor.

Dr. Zander's desire to broach this subject had been made known to me some days before. I expressed my willingness to see him and hear what he had to say. He called accordingly by appointment on the 30th ultimo.

He began by saying that the French Company, known as the Smyrna-Cassaba Railway Company, had of late redoubled their efforts to obtain a connection between the Anatolian Railway line at Afion Karahissar and their own inland terminus at the same place. Hitherto the rival lines have not been joined, although they approach within a few hundred yards of each other. The French Company had simultaneously brought great pressure to bear upon the Ottoman Government for the issue of a concession for the extension of a French line from Soma to Panderma, on the Sea of Marmora. This extension would be of considerable strategic importance, as it would enable Turkish troops stationed within reach of the Cassaba Railway system to be transported rapidly to the coast and thence across to Macedonia. In the recent war large numbers of these troops had to be marched on foot to Panderma or taken round by the Anatolian line, and much time was lost and expense incurred. Fear of hostile fleets in the Ægean Sea is sufficient to render the Smyrna terminus useless for the purpose of sending troops to Europe.

Dr. Zander was unwilling to see the network of the French railway extended to Panderma, and he assured me that the activity of the French Company was causing grave apprehension to the Directors of the Anatolian Railway at Berlin. The latter had lately received tempting offers from the French Directors with a view to the inauguration of a joint railway policy between the two Companies. The German Directors had rejected these offers, but it was becoming more and more clear to them that they could not stand alone in Asia Minor, and that their true policy is to come to terms with the English Railway Company from Smyrna to Aidin and Diner.

Dr. Zander was extremely cautious, and avoided anything like an indication of the terms which the German line was prepared to offer or accept. These, he thought, could probably be adjusted to meet the fair claims of both sides, if once the principle of united action were admitted.

In support of the argument for amalgamation he stated that the rivalry of the two lines in respect of the extension from Diner, the terminus of the English line, to Tchai on the German line, must be at least as damaging to the English as it was to the German Company. Either side had sufficient influence at Constantinople to prevent the concession being given to the other, and neither could secure the prize as long as the other objected. A glance at the map would be sufficient to show that the gap only requires to

be filled up to give the network of the English and German lines an altogether commanding position. In seeking an ally in railway matters the German Company could not hesitate to prefer the English to the French connection, for the latter would place them at the mercy of Russia. The subordination of French to Russian interests in Asia Minor was a commonplace of the political situation. It was of vital importance to the growing commercial interest of Germany in those regions to check the advance of Russia. The struggle would be rendered much more arduous than it was at present, if the French line were allowed to strengthen its position. The provinces included in its ramifications would then become subject to considerable pressure from Russia, and the transport of troops and the ordinary traffic of the railway would be regulated to suit the requirements of that country.

In this connection Dr. Zander mentioned a fact which he said he had concealed hitherto even from the German Embassy. It was that a foreign nation—I could not doubt that he meant Russia—was making serious advances with a view to taking over the entire German interest in the Turkish railways both in Asia Minor and Europe.

Although he was not disposed to attach much importance to Count Kapoist's scheme for a Russian railway from Tripoli in Syria to Koweit on the Persian Gulf, which he thought unsound and deficient in financial backing, it was nevertheless a sign of the times that such a proposal should be put forward by a Russian subject, and it must be remembered that a French demand for a concession to extend the Anatolian line from Konia to Bagdad was being strongly pushed by M. Cottard. Such a concession, if granted, would, of course, be used in the Russian interest. The Russian net, in short, was closing in upon the Anatolian railway system, and a determined effort in conjunction with a friendly ally was required to arrest the process.

The above will perhaps suffice to show the trend of Dr. Zander's remarks. I thanked him for his visit, and promised to report to your Lordship what he had said.

I have since heard that Dr. Siemens, the Berlin Director of the Anatolian Railway, is in England.

I may add that the Managing Director of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway at Smyrna, and the agent of the Company at Constantinople have not ceased to press Her Majesty's Embassy to obtain for them the coveted permission to extend their line to Tchai. Since the date of Sir Philip Currie's *note verbale*, inclosed in copy in his Excellency's despatch to your Lordship No. 123 of the 3rd March, no written communication has been made on the subject to the Sublime Porte. But I continue to remind them verbally from time to time that their treatment of the English Company is a matter of serious concern to Her Majesty's Government, and no opportunity will be lost of repeating our demand as occasion offers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Map.

[Not printed.]

No. 27.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 112.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August* 8, 1898, 4·30 P.M.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 437 of the 4th instant on the subject of the claims put forward against the Turkish Government in respect of losses sustained by foreign subjects during the massacres of Armenians in Turkey, I request you to endeavour to procure a copy of the reply addressed to the Porte by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador.

You should also report to me the nature of any instructions received by the Representatives of France, Germany, or Italy.

No. 28*.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 8.)

(No. 437.) *Constantinople, August* 4, 1898.
My Lord,

AS directed by your Lordship's telegram No. 101 of the 16th ultimo, I informed Messrs. Macnamara and Bond, representing the British claimants for an indemnity on account of losses incurred during the massacres of 1896, that Her Majesty's Government will use their best endeavours to obtain for the British claims as favourable treatment as is accorded to the claims put forward by other countries.

This communication was laid before a general meeting of British claimants, and I have now received the inclosed letter from their two Delegates, expressing regret that means should not have been found to settle these claims, and urging that decisive and final steps should be taken to attain that object.

I learn that the French Ambassador is awaiting instructions from Paris before replying to the Turkish note, in which all liability on account of these claims is repudiated. The German and Italian Embassies are in the same position. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, however, has already replied by a note in which the reasoning of the Porte is rejected and a speedy settlement demanded.

It is understood that the French and Italian embargo on the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Paris has failed, the entire sum due as the last instalment of the Greek war indemnity having been now paid over to the central establishment at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 28*.

Messrs. Bond and Macnamara to Mr. de Bunsen.

Constantinople, August 3, 1898.
Sir,

WE have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 18th ultimo, by which you informed us that you were then authorized by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform us that Her Majesty's Government will use there best endeavours to obtain for the British claims as favourable treatment as is accorded to the claims put forward by other countries.

The above-mentioned despatch has been laid before a meeting of the British victims who suffered losses by pillage during the Constantinople massacres of August 1896. It is regretted by all concerned that Her Majesty's Government has not yet thought fit to safeguard our interests by the firm and decisive action the circumstances of the case demands—for instance, by the laying of an embargo on some part of the proceeds of the Greek war indemnity, or deducting the amount from the surplus revenue of the Island of Cyprus, as is now being done in the case of the refunding of the quay dues levied by the Constantinople Quay Company on British manufactures, or, on the other hand, seeing that Her Majesty's Government have control of funds belonging to the Ottoman Government, some assurance might be given to us by Her Majesty's Government that they will, within a reasonable date, pay us the amount of our claims from such funds unless previously paid by the Ottoman Government.

On the 26th day of this month, two long years will have elapsed since our various establishments were violated, and in most cases the whole of our various stocks-in-trade looted by armed mobs working under the direct orders of Turkish officials, evidence of this fact being sufficiently set out officially in the Blue Books and elsewhere. We now understand that the Sultan repudiates all responsibility, and absolutely refuses to recognize these just claims, for which he personally is universally known to be the direct cause.

These claims were carefully investigated and revised by a competent Commission under the supervision of Her Majesty's Embassy in this city, and everything in the nature of indirect loss was struck out. They were finally presented to the Ottoman Government after being submitted to the Local Officers of the Crown.

Owing to these losses, by which several amongst us have had their stocks-in-trade, which comprised their whole capital, looted, the commercial position of several of us is most critically compromised, two of our number have been obliged to close their

establishments and cease commerce entirely; more of us will soon be forced to do likewise unless Her Majesty's Government give the matter of these claims their immediate attention. Such of our number cannot indefinitely stand the financial strain they have borne for the last two years to save their business connections and stave off proceedings which some creditors abroad daily threaten to institute to enforce payment of what is due them, for goods which were looted by organized mobs under the direct orders of the Sultan's officials.

We most respectfully submit that the time has now come for Her Majesty's Government to take decisive and final steps to enforce immediate payment of these claims, and we venture to hope, Sir, that you will once more call the serious attention of Her Majesty's Government to the urgency of our case, and that you will see fit to recommend that Her Majesty's Government may, in case of need, act independently and authorize you to send the Ottoman Government a final note couched in the most firm terms demanding payment of these claims within thirty days, and informing them that failing such payment at the expiry of the period mentioned, that Her Majesty's Government would proceed forthwith to pay their subjects their claims in accordance with the lists sent to the Ottoman Government, together with a further substantial sum for compensation for the serious consequential damages suffered by all, and for which the Ottoman Government will then be held responsible.

Apart from all other considerations, if the Government of the Sultan of Turkey find they can with impunity violate and pillage, to their hearts' content, the warehouses, stores, offices, &c., of British subjects resident in the Ottoman Empire, whenever the Sultan takes it in his head to do so, we are in fear that should he again decide to resort to a fanatical outburst, the lives of British subjects will be at the mercy of his armed bands, working under the orders of his officials.

We have, &c.
(Signed) RICHD. M. BOND.
H. MACNAMARA.

No. 28.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 9.)

(No. 155.) *Constantinople, August* 9, 1898, 1·45 P.M.
(Telegraphic.) P.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 112, of yesterday, I learn that at the audience granted by the Sultan to the French Ambassador last Friday, his Excellency strongly pressed His Majesty to yield to the demands of the Powers in respect of the massacre claims, but that his representations produced no effect.

The only reply yet sent to the note of the Sublime Porte on the subject is that of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador.

The Minister of the United States has advised his Government that payment of the claims can only be obtained by the use of force.

No. 29.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 15.)

(No. 142.) *Therapia, August* 9, 1898.
My Lord,

ACCORDING to information which has reached me from a trustworthy source, M. Cotard's scheme for a railway from Konieh to Bagdad has been approved by the Council of the Ministry of Public Works, and is now under consideration in the Department of the Grand Vizier. In his despatch No. 303 of the 19th May, Sir P. Currie states that the scheme in question has been put forward by a Syndicate of doubtful nationality. I now learn that its promoters are Franco-Belgian.

Your Lordship is aware that the German Anatolian Railway Company has been driven by the recent French and Russian demands for railway concessions in the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey to seek the co-operation of the English railway interest in Asia Minor in resisting Franco-Russian competition.

I learn that a German protest has likewise been lodged in the Ottoman Department of Public Works against the reception of demands for concessions conflicting with German interests and with the right of preference which the Anatolian Railway claims in respect of all projects for extending its system in an easterly direction. The Department of Public Works [illegible] informed, that the Sublime Porte cannot part with its right to examine all proposals made to it in due form, and that the German Railway Company is at liberty to produce counter-proposals if it pleases.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 30.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 13.)

(No. 143.) *Constantinople, August* 9, 1898.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 132 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to state that, according to a report which has reached Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, a fresh trial of the murderers of Yusuf Yunnan has taken place. Five of the accused are said to have been condemned to penal servitude for life, and the remainder for nine years.

Mr. Monahan is awaiting official confirmation of this rumour from Sairt before reporting further on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 31.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 15.)

(No. 446. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 11, 1898.*

MR. MARINITSCH, Acting Chief Dragoman to Her Majesty's Embassy, took occasion yesterday to ask both the Foreign Minister and the Grand Vizier what truth there was in the statements that had appeared in the papers as to the railway schemes advocated by Count Kapnist and M. Cotard.

As regards the first of these, the outlines of which are given in the inclosure to my despatch No. 426 of the 1st instant, Mr. Marinitsch was informed that the Ottoman Government is resolutely opposed to granting railway concessions to the Russians in the Asiatic portions of the Turkish Empire, and that Count Kapnist's proposal has little prospect of being entertained.

M. Cotard's scheme for a railway from Konieh to Bagdad is regarded at the Porte as the proposal of a hungry promoter of Companies, put forward without any particular political aim, and merely as a financial speculation. The Porte are determined that the Turkish line to the Persian Gulf shall have its western terminus opposite Constantinople. This condition, apparently, M. Cotard is ready to fulfil by connecting his line with the Anatolian Railway at Konieh; but the latter Company would insist on its own right to extend its network in an easterly direction, and M. Cotard would be unable to overcome the strenuous opposition which would be offered in that quarter to his proposal.

It must be remembered, however, that these assurances represent only the opinions which prevail at the Porte, and that the Palace is in no sense bound by them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 32.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 15.)

(No. 449.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 11, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 430, Confidential, of the 2nd August, respecting the situation in the Yemen, I have the honour to report that Riza Pasha, the Minister of War, has received information to the effect that the General of Division, Naim Pasha, has landed troops at Meiha and attacked and defeated the rebels of the Goulil district.

According to Riza Pasha's own statements, the rebellion has now been totally quelled in the Yemen, and the authorities are making every effort to remedy the distress caused by the famine.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 33.

Consul Stevens to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 20)
My Lord, *Batoum, July 26, 1898.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 3 of the 23rd January, 1896, on the subject of the disabilities under which the Armenian population of the Trans-Caucasus laboured, and the mode of treatment which the inhabitants of that nationality received at the hands of the administrative authorities of this country, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that the buildings of the schools therein spoken of, which have remained closed ever since that date, together with all the properties and revenues belonging to them, are now being confiscated by officials duly appointed by the Ministry of Public Instruction for that purpose.

These establishments will probably, in the future, be placed under the direct administration and immediate control of the last-mentioned Department, in which case instructors of Russian nationality are to be appointed to them in lieu of the Armenian teachers, who, it would appear, are considered by the Government to be no longer qualified to fulfil the duties which, if the schools are reopened, the new régime is likely to require.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. STEVENS.

No. 34.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 451.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 12, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the result of a tour of inspection by the Vali in the northern cazas of the vilayet

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 34.

Consul Graves to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, July 20, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 14 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have returned to Erzeroum after spending a fortnight with the Vali, Raouf Pasha, who is engaged on a tour of the northern cazas of this vilayet. His Excellency has now left the Tortoum district, on his way to Baiburt, Tendjan, and Keghi, and a brief summary of such results of his visit to the first-named caza as came under my own observation may not be without interest.

Raouf Pasha's first care was to inquire into any complaints against officials of the caza. The former census official ("Noufous Memouroun") of the caza, who was lately transferred to the Passin Caza, having been accused of corrupt practices, his Excellency ordered him to be brought to Tortoum under escort, and after a personal investigation into the charges, directed that he should be sent to Erzeroum for trial.

Communications in the very mountainous district comprising the Cazas of Tortoum, Nariman, and Keskim, have hitherto been extremely defective. The extent of arable land is very limited, and the poor and scanty population live largely by the sale in Erzeroum of their fruit and garden produce, their profits being, however, greatly reduced by the difficulty of transport. The Vali has now undertaken the construction of a cart-road connecting Keskim, through the Tortoum Valley, with Erzeroum. 700 labourers started to work early in the present month, and I was glad to see the peasants coming forward in large numbers, without any compulsion, to do their share of the road-building, thus proving that they are quite alive to the utility of the undertaking.

The capital of the Tortoum Caza has hitherto been situated at the Village of Nikakh, which does not occupy a central position, and is threatened with destruction by landslips—a fate which overtook the neighbouring village of Hunzorig nine years ago, when 200 lives were lost. The Vali has therefore ordered the transfer of the seat of Government to Tortoum Kalè, which is in all respects more suitable, and lies in a good central position upon the road now in process of construction

His Excellency was much struck by the backwardness of the people in fruit and vegetable culture, the staple of the district, and has taken measures to procure and distribute the seeds of various vegetables now imported into Erzeroum from Diarbekir, but which would grow equally well in Keskim and Tortoum, besides engaging one or two skilled gardeners from Trebizond to instruct the peasants in their cultivation. The Vali also issued a Circular to all the Heads of villages, as well as to the Imams of

the district, calling on them to use their influence with the people to prevent the destruction of the remaining forests, a process which is now going on without intermission with the most ruinous economic consequences to the country.

Thus a visit of a few days, which Raouf Pasha described to me as mainly a pleasure trip, has been turned to much real account by his Excellency, and an opportunity has been afforded me of appreciating the practical administrative abilities of the Vali, to whose high character for humanity and integrity I have so often had occasion to bear testimony.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 35.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 452.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 12, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 366 of the 22nd June last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting an arrangement come to with the Druses with regard to the payment of their taxes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 25, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 30 of the 11th ultimo reporting the departure on a Mission to the Hauran of Murad Effendi Ruwetli and Sheikh Selim Nawfal with a view to an arrangement with the Druses of the Jebel as regards the payment of taxes, I have the honour to inform you that those persons have returned to Damascus and submitted a Mazbata, or Report, to the Vali on the subject of their Mission. It would appear from this document that the Druses have consented to pay a lump sum of 150,000 piastres (the original estimate of the amount due from them was 300,000 piastres) in lieu of all Government claims for tithe for last year. This money is to be paid by yearly instalments in the course of three years in those villages where the crops have suffered from the devastation caused by locusts. Where this is not the case the payment of the money will have to be effected in two years.

As regards the current year it has been arranged that a sum of 100,000 piastres is to be paid in lieu of tithe; the money to be levied by the Druses themselves, village by village.

I should state that it has been hinted to me that it is somewhat doubtful if the Druses have really consented to pay this money, they being accustomed to receive money and not pay it! Reference is made here to the "allowances" granted to the Druses by the Government which I mentioned in the despatch under reference. Should the Druses ultimately refuse to abide by the terms of this arrangement, which are extremely favourable to them, they will deserve to lose the support and sympathy of all their well-wishers, seeing that the amount which they are asked to pay is far below what might in justice have been demanded of them.

As regards the amount of the sheep tax I regret that I am not yet in a position to give figures, but I am well aware that here too it is proposed to treat the Druses with the utmost leniency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 36.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 453.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 14, 1898.*

IN the inclosed despatch Captain Maunsell gives on the whole a satisfactory account of the northern portion of the Vilayet of Sivas, through which he passed on his way to take up his temporary appointment at Trebizond. The Mutessarif of Tokat is well spoken of; brigandage is no longer rife in his district, and the Armenians seem to have recovered some confidence, notwithstanding the injudicious withdrawal of troops for duty further east. A recent agitation against the Armenians in Niksar, to the north-east of Tokat, is ascribed by Captain Maunsell to the desire of the Vali of the province to discredit the Mutessarif, whose personal enemy he is, by promoting disturbances in the latter district. The Vali is not in good repute at the Porte, and Her Majesty's Embassy has had occasion to complain of his conduct in the matter of the forced abductions of Armenian girls.

Captain Maunsell's last despatches from Sivas, however, reported a change for the better in his behaviour, and I have taken no further steps to press for his removal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Captain Maunsell to Mr. de Bunsen.

Sir, *Trebizond, August 9, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report as follows on the state of affairs in the Sivas Vilayet, from information obtained on my journey from Sivas to Samsun, and also from a letter received to-day from Dr. Jewett at Sivas:—

The withdrawal, previously reported from Sivas, of the 20th Cavalry Regiment (five squadrons) from Sivas, Tokat, and Karahissar, and its being replaced by only two squadrons of the 21st at Karahissar and Sivas, has been causing the Armenians at Tokat some anxiety.

The Vali had previously protested against this withdrawal of troops from the vilayet, but it seems they were required further east.

On passing through Tokat, the Armenians seemed perfectly quiet and contented, and I heard no complaints, while their anxiety seems to have abated.

About ten days previous to my arrival in Tokat some Mussulmans of Niksar had assumed a threatening attitude towards some rich Armenians who had escaped the general massacres, and whom the Mussulmans now wished to rob.

Bekir Pasha, the Mutessarif of Tokat, an excellent official well known to Her Majesty's Embassy, had taken up the matter strongly, and when I left Tokat the matter seemed completely settled.

The Kaïmakam of Niksar, a native of Sivas, is by no means a good man, and was quite indifferent and even friendly to the proceedings of the Niksar Mussulmans.

As will be seen by my previous Sivas despatches, the Vali of Sivas and Bekir Pasha are most bitter enemies, and, in my own opinion, the real reason of the threats at Niksar was that the Vali, through the instrumentality of the Kaïmakam, was endeavouring to get up a disturbance at Niksar, so as to discredit Bekir Pasha and obtain his dismissal from the vilayet.

From Dr. Jewett's letter, the Vali seems to have represented the matter to him in the worst light as regards Bekir Pasha. Having regard to the extreme fanaticism of the Tokat and Niksar populations, the withdrawal of troops is not a good measure, but I have every confidence in Bekir Pasha being able to check any disturbance. He has, for instance, the large Circassian population of his sanjak at his immediate call.

I travelled direct from Tokat to Samsun through Horek, across the mountains, and can testify the absolute security from brigandage in Bekir Pasha's sanjak.

This enmity between the Vali and Bekir Pasha is by no means a good thing for the peace of the vilayet, and I would venture to submit that this is an additional

reason for urging the removal of the Vali elsewhere. His government, above all, is feeble, which, in times of serious trouble in the country, might lead to disaster.

I hear from Dr. Jewett that the murderers of the Armenians at Maksudlu have now been brought to trial at Sivas. This ought to reassure the Armenians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 37.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 151)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 15, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 101 and 119 of the 12th and 27th July, concerning the affairs of the Bitlis Vilayet, I have the honour to report the death of the Vali, Eumer Sabri Bey, from heart disease, on the afternoon of the 28th ultimo.

With a view to obtaining, if possible, the appointment of a competent Governor to replace him, I caused representations to be made to the Porte, urging that an official should be chosen of sufficient strength and energy to maintain order in the province.

No particular pains, however, appear to have been taken to make a good selection. The new Vali, Medjid Bey, like his predecessor, has had no administrative experience. His career was confined to the offices of the Porte until the year 1891, when he became a member of the Sassoun Commission. His services on this occasion gained him the favour of the Sultan, by whose direct choice he is now obtained promotion.

As reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 101 of the 12th July, I sent to Mr. Monahan the late Vali's reply to the Porte's inquiries, which were made in consequence of the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy concerning the manner in which it was alleged that the search for arms had been conducted in the Mush and Tadvan districts.

Mr. Monahan, in his reply, which I have now received, still adheres to his opinion of the conduct of Ibrahim Bey and Ali Bey, as reported in his despatch No. 70 of the 27th June, forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 101 above referred to.

There can be no doubt that these officers performed their duties with excessive harshness. Mr. Monahan's Dragoman found evidence of torture of a revolting kind in the case of one of the twenty-five villagers, who were put to the question at Kidzvag. The remainder, he has good reason to believe, were made to suffer similar indignities. Positive proof is seldom attainable in these cases, but Her Majesty's Consul is convinced that much cruelty was exercised throughout the district.

I also sent to Mr. Monahan, for his observations, a Memorandum, which I had received from a private source, giving a list of various outrages upon Armenians in the Province of Bitlis. I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of Mr. Monahan's reply, showing that these reports were founded on fact, though somewhat exaggerated, if Mr. Monahan's information is correct. The difference between the two statements is shown in the margin of Mr. Monahan's Report. Mr. Monahan adds a further list of recent outrages, from which it appears that a general condition of lawlessness prevails in the Bitlis Vilayet, and that the authorities are unwilling or unable to prevent repeated attacks upon Armenian villagers, or the blood feuds among the Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Bitlis, July 24, 1898.*

WITH reference to your despatch of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to submit the following observations on the Memorandum therein inclosed. I have, for the sake of convenience, numbered in the Memorandum, which I herewith return, the cases with which it deals:—

1. The case of the murder of Hilmi Bey seems to call for no detailed observations,

as I have already fully dealt with it. The trial, as I have had the honour to telegraph, will take place in Erzeroum. The Vali alleges that the murder was committed by Armenian revolutionists in concert with the Armenians mentioned in the Memorandum, and with his own personal enemies the three or four Mussulmans of the Kurdish party.

2. Atam was killed last January. It is said to have been done by the men of the Sheikh of Khizan. Here in Bitlis nothing further seems to be known of the case.

3. Vartan and Ohannes, the Notables of Kharkoltz (Khizan), were wounded last January. It seems to have been done by Kurds. Ohannes was wounded in the arm, and is now quite well. The other man is certainly alive, but I have no further information about him. These men were reported to have been killed.

4. Ohannes and Kirkor were killed in their own house in Khizan in the night on the date mentioned. This again is said to have been done by the Sheikh of Khizan's men.

5. One Shamiram Christian was found killed about six months ago between Shamiram and the neighbouring Kurdish village Boriau. It is supposed that he was murdered by men of the latter village. The rest of the Shamiram story is without foundation. Four men were reported killed.

6. I had not heard of this case, but now learn from the Armenian Bishop of Bitlis that two men, of Khakrev and Morzak respectively, did disappear early in April as stated. Nothing more is known.

7. This case has not been heard of in Bitlis, nor do I remember having heard of it in Mush, whence the information comes. One man was reported killed in the Village of Ardonk.

8. This man of Galloug (Tadig) was killed about the end of last May as stated. His brother is in prison, the Vali maintaining that the murder was committed by Armenian revolutionists, while the brother, who was present at the murder, accuses by name certain Kurds who, he says, entered their house at night for the purpose of robbery.

This nahié Tadig is within three hours of Bitlis.

9. This is the case reported in my telegram No. 10 of the 14th May last. During my absence in Sherwan a Turkish Commission examined the wounded women who since died. The Vali tells me she stated that the "réis" (Headman) of the village instigated her to accuse by name three Kurds, while the murders were really committed by Armenian revolutionists. The truth appears to be that another woman gave the Vali the information. The réis is in prison.

This district, Guzeldéré, is within two hours of Bitlis.

I may add the following cases which have lately been reported to me:

A woman of Sassig, also in Tadig nahié, was killed there about the 7th June, and the réis of her village also is in prison as being responsible for such matters. The Vali says that this murder also was committed by Armenian revolutionists. It is generally imputed to Kurdish robbers.

The following is another case from Tadig nahié. A Bitlis Armenian named Karo was travelling through Tadig. His headless body was found about the 7th June on the road near Vannig, the réis of which village is in prison on account of the case. The Vali, I think, imputes this murder also to Armenian revolutionists.

About ten days ago, Halil Bey, a member of the far-most Kurdish family of Bitlis, was travelling among nomad Kurds in Erouo (Sherwan Ova) with an Armenian, named Mugsi. They have both disappeared. The riderless horse of Halil Bey has been found. Seventeen gendarmes have gone to search for the missing men.

In Avel-Bokhar, an Armenian village on the Mush Plain, the son of the réis (Headman) was murdered five days ago by the son of the Jebranli Kurd Nado. Nado is a famous brigand, now in Bitlis prison. No attempt, so far as I know, has been made to arrest the son. The reason of this murder is unknown.

In the second week of the present month of July, three Armenians were killed on the Mush Plain, one in Nourshen, one in Pertagh, and one in Sikavi. Two Armenians were wounded on the Mush Plain about the same time. Jebranli Hamidiehs, and Bekiranli nomads, were the perpetrators of these five cases. The men were murdered or wounded because they tried to save their sheep or cattle from these Kurdish robbers.

The following are the recent cases of sheep and cattle raiding on the Mush Plain:—

In the second week of July six oxen were taken from Nourshen and twenty from Unan. In both these cases Jebranli Hamidiehs were the perpetrators. In the same week 200 sheep were carried off from Pertagh by Bekiranlis. The villages mentioned

are exclusively Christian. In the present month, July, 200 sheep were carried off from the Monastery of Surp Karabet, and many sheep from the Christian village Pazo.

The above information about Mush Plain was brought yesterday by a Protestant from Mush, whom I believe to be trustworthy. He gives the names of the killed and wounded.

On the 1st June, in Boulanik, a Kurd killed two Kurds and was then himself killed, and about the same time a Hassananli was killed by a Hyderanli in Koullig (Akhlat). A feud is said to have been the result of the latter case, but I have heard of no incidents of the feud.

There can be no doubt that the Turkish Government is still allowing armed Kurds in this vilayet to murder Christians, and occasionally to kill each other; and I believe that the Vali dishonestly imputes to Armenian revolutionists crimes with which they have had nothing to do.

I have, &c
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 38.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 22.)

(No. 156.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 17, 1898.

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reports that sentence was passed on the 13th instant on eleven Armenian political prisoners, of whom two were condemned to death, three to fifteen, three to ten, and three to five years' imprisonment.

Captain Elliot, while admitting the justice of the sentences in question, draws attention to the fact that outrages on Armenians by Moslems have hitherto remained unpunished.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 39.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 5.)

(No. 171.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 26, 1898.

IN my despatch No. 153 of the 17th instant I had the honour to report to your Lordship, on the authority of a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, that two of the convicted Armenian revolutionists at Van had been sentenced to death, and others to various terms of imprisonment. Captain Elliot has since reminded me of the fact that no capital sentences have been carried out upon Mussulmans in Asia Minor for complicity in the massacres, and he states that much ill-feeling is to be apprehended if similar leniency is not extended to the Armenians.

The Sultan is by nature reluctant to sign death sentences, but I have thought it right to express a hope at the Porte that His Majesty will not in the present instance depart from his usual practice in such matters. I was given to understand in reply that there was every probability of His Majesty exercising his clemency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 40.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 5.)

(No. 474.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 29, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 454 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to state that, according to a further report which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, a Commission will shortly start for Akhlat to investigate the charges brought against Ali Bey, the Lieutenant of Gendarmerie, and his men of having inflicted torture on the inhabitants of that district during their search for concealed arms.

This Commission will consist of the Christian Muavin of the district, a Mussulman member of the Administrative Council, and some others whose names are not yet known.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 41.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 5.)

(No. 475.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 29, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 454 and 474 of the 15th and 29th instant, I have the honour to state that I continue to receive from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis unfavourable reports as to the condition of that vilayet.

All these reports tend to show that the search for concealed arms carried out under the direction of the Lieutenant of Gendarmerie, Ali Bey, has been attended by acts of great harshness and even cruelty, and that acts of violence, which the authorities do little to prevent or punish, have long been rife throughout the whole district.

Thus, as long ago as last June the ancient Monastery of Surp Agh-perig was forcibly entered by about eight gendarmes and forty soldiers, accompanied by numerous Kurds from the neighbourhood, who proceeded to search the premises by order of the local authorities, on the ground that revolutionists and arms were concealed there. They then beat the Superior and all the monks, and departed after plundering the monastery. The articles stolen included not only ecclesiastical vestments and church furniture, but money and domestic utensils.

The Kurds have also stolen a number of sheep belonging to the monastery, and have entirely ruined the crops by turning out their cattle to graze among them, with the result that the monks are without food, and unable to live in their dwelling, which has become uninhabitable.

A complaint on the subject was made to the late Vali by the Bishop of Bitlis, at the request of the Bishop of Mush, but little was done beyond ordering the Mutessarif of Mush to send gendarmes for the protection of the monastery, and the former Prelate declares his belief that no steps will ever be taken nor will the stolen property be restored.

About the middle of July the gendarmes, under the command of Ali Bey, shot two Christian villagers by night at Vartenis, a village near Mush. The wounded men, of whom one has since died, declared under pressure that their assailants were revolutionists.

The affair at Tadvan, in which five Armenian revolutionists were besieged by gendarmes during a whole night, has already been reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 419 of the 27th ultimo, and I have the honour to transmit herewith a full Report which I have received from Mr. Monahan on the subject.

Besides the above cases, others have come to his notice, notably several in which Christian villagers have been obliged to cede parts of their land to Kurdish Chiefs or Hamidieh officers in return for protection. There are also many instances of cattle-lifting by Kurds and Hamidieh cavalry, and two or three of plundering churches.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 13.)

Sir, *Bitlis, August* 2, 1898.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 52 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to report that on the evening of the 24th ultimo about twelve gendarmes, under Alai Bey (Chief of the Bitlis Gendarmerie) and the notorious Lieutenant Ali Bey, having received some information, entered Tadvan, a large Christian village on Lake Van, and found that five Armenian revolutionists were in a house there. These revolutionists were—

1. Simon, a young man of Bitlis, who, being suspected by the Government, ran away from the town two years ago to avoid imprisonment, joined Sirop's band, and, as reported in my despatch No. 3 of the 25th March last, took part in the murder of Hilmi Bey, Chief of Police.

2. Alexan, Simon's brother-in-law, who ran away with him on the same occasion.

3. A man of Tadvan named Paré, who escaped from Bitlis prison on the 26th April last (see my telegram of the 29th April), and then joined the same band.

4. Parsegh, a man of Haskeui, on Mush plain.

5. A man of Almali, in Van Vilayet, named Nadir.

The gendarmes posted themselves opposite the house and fired on the door. Simon and Nadir ran out. The latter escaped, but Simon was shot dead. The three others remained in the house, firing on the gendarmes all that night. One gendarme was killed, and one gendarme and one Kurd were wounded. A Christian villager of Tadvan, an old man named Khilvat, came forward near the door, and, according to the official version, implored the revolutionists to surrender, and was then himself killed by a shot from the house. According to another version, he was passing the house early in the fight, and was accidentally shot. However, it seems certain that he was killed by a bullet from the revolutionists.

At length, in the early morning of the 25th, the gendarmes succeeded in setting fire to the house, and the three revolutionists, having previously broken their rifles, were suffocated by the smoke, and their dead bodies were dragged out by the gendarmes.

I visited Tadvan, on the morning of the 25th, with Captain Elliott, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, and found the village nearly empty, the people having fled in terror to neighbouring villages. The gendarmes above mentioned had all left, but there were a few other gendarmes guarding the village. There were many marks of the revolutionists' bullets on a wall opposite the still-burning house, and the dead body of the villager Khilvat was lying there behind the wall for the doctor to come from Bitlis and examine it. Kurds from a neighbouring village had come to Tadvan during the fight, and had taken the opportunity to rob some houses. When we came some of these Kurds were still there, but they were about to leave.

The conduct of the gendarmes under the Alai Bey and Ali Bey seems to have been on this occasion irreproachable as well as courageous. I have heard of no complaint of them on the part of any of the Tadvan people.

Captain Elliott and I advised some 150 of these people who had fled to a neighbouring village, Shamiran, to return to their homes, and they and almost all the other fugitives had done so by the evening of the 25th. No one was subsequently interfered with in the village, and no consequences detrimental to the tranquillity of the country have ensued.

Four rifles were captured, and are all of the same Russian military pattern. I saw the one rifle that was taken unchanged. It had the word "Nikol" in Russian letters stamped on the bolt, and the date, 1892, with a flag and two apparently Armenian letters stamped on the barrel.

Sirop is still at large with his main band. His present whereabouts seems to be unknown.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

No. 42.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 182.)

My Lord, *Constantinople. September* 5, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 451 of the 12th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting the relations of the Ottoman authorities with the Druses.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 42.

Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 42.)

Sir, *Damascus, August* 18, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that it is probable that Selim Effendi Naufal will be appointed honorary member of the Idaré Mejliss of the vilayet (Administrative Council) as semi-official Representative of the Druses in Syria. With a view to bring about this much-desired result the Druses of Hasheya, Rasheya, Sahnaya, Ashrafyé, Bab-el-Mussallak, and probably those of the Hauran, are preparing mazbatas, or petitions, in their various districts, for presentation to the Vali, who, it is understood, is inclined to favour the project.

If this appointment is made the advantage accruing to the Druses will be considerable.

I am also informed that five Druse Notables of distinction have recently arrived in Damascus, having been summoned by the Vali to come and discuss with him personally the question of the levying of tithe among their co-religionists in the Jebel Druse.

I will also mention an incident of no importance in itself, though it has a certain significance for those studying the Druse question:

Quite recently a man of this nationality was arrested by the police in the Midan quarter of the city for carrying arms without a licence to do so. At the intervention of one of the Druse Delegates mentioned above the Vali gave orders to the police to the effect that no Druses entering the city armed should be required to exhibit a licence. This incident is another proof, if any were necessary, of the extremely conciliatory attitude adopted by the Vali towards the Druses.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 43.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 184.)

My Lord, *Therapia. September* 5, 1898.

IN my despatch No. 435 of the 3rd August, I had the honour to report to your Lordship that the Constantinople Manager of the Anatolian Railway Company, Dr. Zander, had made advances to me, confidentially, with a view to a possible understanding between the British and German railway interests in Asia Minor.

Your Lordship informed me in reply by your telegram No. 110 of the 3rd ultimo, that Lord Rathmore, on behalf of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway Company, was prepared to receive proposals which might be made by the rival line aiming at joint action and friendly co-operation, but that he thought actual amalgamation of the two lines might be open to objection.

I communicated this reply to Dr. Zander, and he begged me to wait for his rejoinder until he should receive full instructions from Berlin.

We met again yesterday at his request, but he merely repeated and emphasized what he had said before on the urgency of an agreement between the two Companies in the interest of both, adding that the Berlin Director was most anxious to attain this object, and thus to defeat the machinations of the Smyrna-Cassaba Railway. He hoped that the London Directors of the British line would discuss the question in all its bearings with Messrs. Freshfield, who represented the interests of the German line in London, and he was particularly anxious that permission should be given to a German expert to travel on the British line, take stock of its plant and general condition, and draw up a report which might serve as the basis of a working arrangement between the two lines.

I am writing directly to Mr. Herring on the subject, your Lordship having informed me, in your telegram No. 115 of the 10th ultimo, that that gentleman would receive any communication in the absence of Lord Rathmore from London.

Meanwhile I am left under the impression, after the second interview with Dr. Zander, that nothing short of amalgamation is aimed at by the German Company, and that they believe the financial position and prospects of the English Company to be such that the latter would welcome this result, provided that suitable arrangements could be come to as regards representation on the Board of Direction, and the partition of influence between the British and German shareholders.

The British Directors will doubtless exercise due caution in defence of their interests. It would be a serious matter to allow the only British line in Asia Minor to be absorbed under any conditions in the network of foreign railways, and I have been careful to give no encouragement to any such expectation on the part of the German Director.

It is of course obvious that the disappearance of a British undertaking of this kind in the principal centre of the Turkish export trade would involve a considerable loss of prestige besides the direct pecuniary sacrifice entailed by the substitution of foreign for British railway material. Under foreign management the conditions of transport would naturally be framed in a manner hostile to the British importer and exporter, and trade would suffer as it did when the Cassaba line was transferred from a British to a French Company.

At the same time I think that the British Company should realize that the Sultan is at present absolutely indisposed to grant the extension which they so justly claim. I again pressed the Grand Vizier yesterday through Mr. Marinitch, to lay the case before the Sultan, and to declare to His Majesty that no improvement could be looked for in his relations with England so long as this grievance was allowed to stand in the way.

From His Highness' language, however, Mr. Marinitch thinks the Porte will refuse to reopen the question at the Palace, unless the Sultan himself calls for a fresh report. Mr. Marinitch will speak of the matter at the Palace to-morrow, but until the German Emperor's visit is over, our demands will, I believe, continue to be disregarded. I can only hope that by repeating them I may keep the question open and lead the Sultan to expect a more serious onslaught from Her Majesty's Ambassador.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 44.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 3.)

(No. 505.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 25, 1898.*

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 334 of the 7th June, I have the honour to transmit copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, commenting on the increased activity displayed of late by the French missionaries in proselytizing among the Nestorians. Captain Elliot considers that their efforts are likely to arrest in some degree the propaganda of the Russian

clergy, who last year induced such large numbers of Nestorians along the Turco-Persian frontier to join the Orthodox fold.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Captain Elliot to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 25. Confidential.)
Sir, *Van, September 13, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report that news has been received from Persia to the effect that the Russian Mission to the Nestorians in Urmi is smaller and less important than at first expected.

The Dominican Fathers in Van have been very active this year in making converts both among Armenians and Nestorians. The Reverend Père de France, who is also French Vice-Consul here, is at present in Hekkiari, where he expected to be joined by a priest from Mosul. I have no doubt but that their object is to arrange for receiving Nestorians into the Roman Catholic Church.

There is considerable feeling amongst all classes here against the Fathers, owing to the number of conversions to their faith that have recently taken place.

I believe that M. Minouski, the Russian Vice-Consul, made great efforts to pave the way for the Nestorians in Turkey going over to the Orthodox Church. Some months ago it appeared that he was very sanguine of success. Now, however, that the French have appeared in the field, well supplied with money, and prepared to push matters energetically, the Nestorians seem to prefer the bird in hand of material assistance, and such protection as the French can afford them at the moment, to the two in the bush of the much more efficient protection of Russia at some future time.

Though at first sight it may appear of little importance into what fold a people so ready to desert for material benefits their ancient Church and faith may eventually be gathered, their are other aspects of the question that deserve consideration.

I heard at Julfa that the railway was expected there in two years' time, and that it had been decided to bridge the Aras at that point instead of farther west. Doubtless, railway Concessions in Azarbijan have been or will be arranged for, and Russia will have before long as firm a grip of that province as she may desire, and be in a position to make the next forward move.

Turkey cannot remain unaffected. The Mountain Nestorians in Turkey are active, hardy men, who, inferior in number and badly armed though they be, can, when not interfered with by the Government, quite hold their own with the Kurds, than whom I consider them more courageous. The country they inhabit is difficult, and it would be easy to create serious trouble and embarrassment for the Turkish Government by intriguing amongst them.

A Turkish official once remarked that Hekkiari could easily become another Montenegro. I am inclined to believe that all that would be required to enable it to fulfil this rôle would be a little secret encouragement and a few hundred good rifles, with plenty of ammunition, that could easily be smuggled across the border.

The people, though somewhat unruly, acknowledge Mar Shimum as their spiritual and temporal Ruler under the Turkish Government.

When I returned from Persia last time it had not been decided what line the English Mission there would eventually take. Three courses appeared open to them:—

1. To abandon the field altogether to the Russians.
2. To leave Persia and settle in Turkey.
3. To continue to carry on the work both in Persia and Turkey.

In conversation I took the liberty of pointing out to the gentlemen of the Mission that any retirement before the Russians must have a disastrous effect on British prestige in those parts. Ecclesiastically, it might accord with their views to hand over the results of their labour to the Orthodox Church. The people, however, would be unable to appreciate the motives which would actuate such conduct.

Nothing will convince the natives, or, what is more, the foreigners in the country, Consuls, or others, that such a Mission is not more or less a political agency, and the esteem in which the British name is held depends on the amount of protection and consideration from the authorities and people that can be secured for British citizens, especially when pursuing a calling that is firmly believed to have official sympathy.

At Kochannes I found Mar Shimum much depressed by the prospect of the wholesale desertion of their Church by this people, to the Orthodox Church on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic on the other.

Moreover, the attitude of the Archbishop (Matran) of the Nestorians, who had fled from Shemdinan, in Turkey, and was then in Persia, was doubtful. Communications had passed between him and the Russian Mission.

It was on my return to Van about the middle of June that I learnt what progress the Dominican Fathers had made in proselytizing both among Nestorians and Armenians. The Père de France told me that he had practically got hold of all the villages near Van and in the neighbourhood of Arjek and Serai, and that he intended to go to Hekkiari, where he expected to be almost equally successful, at any rate, in some parts.

I took an opportunity of discussing these questions with the Vali. My view was that of two evils it was very much the less that the Nestorians should join the Roman Catholic Church, as, should they become Orthodox, Russia would have endless opportunities and excuses for interference, and that even if the French wanted to intrigue and to interfere politically, they were not in the same position to do so as effectively as the Russians. Moreover, this latest move of theirs would be a cause of irritation between them and Russia.

I suggested that it would be better to remove the possibility of such outside interference being acceptable by giving the Nestorians proper protection, and strengthening Mar Shimum in his attempts to govern the people. I thought it as well that the Matran should be removed from temptation, and suggested that Sheikh Sadig should be dealt with so that this Prelate might return to his diocese.

I learnt from the Vali some weeks ago that he had taken this matter in hand, and that the Matran had returned to Shemdinan.

On hearing that the Archbishop of Canterbury had no intention of abandoning his Mission, I had another conversation with Tahir Pasha on this subject. I represented that the English missionaries had no intention of proselytizing, that they would support Mar Shimum's authority, and give him and his people good advice, which would tend to make them less inclined to intrigue and give trouble, and therefore that it appeared sound policy to encourage them, and do all in his power to increase Mar Shimum's prestige and authority.

He replied, with some truth, that Mar Shimum was so feeble and undecided that he appeared quite unfitted to govern, however much assistance was given him. I told him I thought it likely another Englishman might be sent to live in Kochannes, and that he and Mr. Browne, who is already there, might succeed in getting Mar Shimum to display the requisite firmness.

The Vali proposes to visit Hekkiari, if possible within a few weeks, and he promised to give this matter his attention.

So far I have found Tahir Pasha satisfactory. He has considerable experience and ability, and I am of opinion that as long as he chooses to govern well he is perfectly capable of doing so.

According to the "Weekly Times" of the 20th August, the Russian Mission left Tiflis on the 10th August.

Under the circumstances, it appears to me fortunate, from a political point of view, that the French missionaries have stepped into the breach, for, had they not done so, I cannot help thinking that the Russians would, under the conditions existing at the beginning of the year, have carried all before them. I have little doubt that Mar Shimum will still have a large number of the people with him, the more so as the Matran has been confirmed in his faith. The English Mission, when thus reinforced, will have a considerable field to work in, in Turkey at any rate, and they and the French between them ought to leave little room in this country for Orthodox intrusion, which is of all things the least to be desired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 3.)

(No. 506. Confidential.)
Constantinople, September 27, 1898.

My Lord,

ALTHOUGH the recent reports from Her Majesty's Consular officers in Eastern Asia Minor show on the whole an improvement in the general order and tranquillity of the districts inhabited by Armenians, it would be wrong to conclude that the legitimate grievances of this people have been redressed, or that they have acquiesced in the restriction of their liberties, and in the position of increased subjection to their Mussulman neighbours in which they have been left since the massacres.

Your Lordship is aware that the Armenian Gregorian Patriarch at the end of last year submitted a series of proposals to the Porte, and that last February five of the sixteen points upon which he had laid stress were nominally conceded by the Sultan. The five points are enumerated in Sir Philip Currie's despatch No. 84 of the 9th February. They include permission for the Armenians to travel freely within the limits of the Empire, and to return thither from abroad if known not to be connected with revolutionary projects.

In a subsequent despatch, however (No. 132 of the 8th March), his Excellency reported that the promised concessions had proved futile, and that the Patriarch despaired of obtaining justice for his people through the Sultan, and looked to an understanding between England and Russia on the Armenian question as affording the only prospect of a better state of things.

Side by side with the avowed correspondence between the Sublime Porte and the Patriarch, there seems to have proceeded an underhand negotiation at Paris between Munir Bey, the Ottoman Ambassador, and an Armenian Committee in Paris. From the inclosed document, however, which has reached us from a private source, it will be seen that the Armenian Committee is no better satisfied than the Patriarch with the Turkish promises.

It purports to be copy of a note from the Committee to the Ambassador, and it refers to an Imperial Iradé received by the Committee on the 15th April last, promising a general amnesty, freedom for Armenians to return to their homes, and other privileges. The Committee state that the amnesty is still in abeyance, that arrests continue, and that Armenians returning to Turkey on the faith of the Sultan's assurances are thrown into prison. Under these circumstances a reconciliation is impossible, and the Committee will be driven to break off all relation with the Representatives of the Sultan. Before doing so, however, they will wait till the end of the month, so as to give the Imperial Government a last chance of fulfilling its engagements.

I learn that the threat of a rupture has produced some impression at Yildiz Palace. A confidential Agent has been employed to reopen negotiations with the Committee, and the latter have been given to understand that the remaining political prisoners will be gradually set at liberty, excepting only those who have committed crimes against common law.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Note addressed to Munir Bey by the Central Armenian Committee at Paris.

Paris, le Septembre, 1898.

LE Comité Central Révolutionnaire Arménien de Paris se trouve à regret obligé de soumettre à votre Excellence des observations sur les faits suivants relatifs aux négociations engagées par son intermédiaire avec le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Après de longs et difficiles pourparlers votre Excellence avait transmis au Comité comme conclusion de l'entente projetée, un Iradé Impérial qui comportait une amnistie sans restriction, garantissant la sécurité des Arméniens en Turquie, et

donnant notamment l'assurance que les Arméniens ayant émigré au cours des massacres, pourraient rentrer dans leur foyer, sans être aucunement inquiétés par la police ou par les autorités locales.

Nous ne nous étions pas permis de faire au Gouvernement Impérial l'injure de ne pas ajouter foi à la sincérité des bonnes intentions que manifestait Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan dans cet Acte authentique.

L'Iradé a été transmis au Comité le 15 Avril. Plusieurs mois se sont écoulés depuis sans que les engagements pris par le Sultan lui-même aient été pleinement et entièrement réalisés. A plusieurs reprises le Comité Central a rappelé à votre Excellence la parole donnée et les assurances réitérées par elle au sujet de la prompte exécution des engagements pris au nom du Sultan. Plus de dix fois des délais ont été consentis par le Comité sur les sollicitations de votre Excellence. Malgré ces délais, l'accomplissement des promesses contenues dans l'Iradé est demeuré à l'heure ineffectué.

Quand votre Excellence fut récemment rappelée en Turquie, elle nous donna l'assurance la plus formelle que l'Iradé allait être exécuté; elle nous garantit notamment la mise en liberté [illegible] Paris de tous les prisonniers Arméniens dont la liste lui était remise par le Comité. Depuis lors plusieurs mois se sont écoulés sans qu'il soit survenu dans la situation de changement appréciable.

Ainsi, malgré l'Iradé, malgré l'assurance qu'il a plu à Sa Majesté donner, malgré les promesses réitérées tant de fois répétées, nos soldats [illegible] mois, l'amnistie pleine et entière n'a pas été accomplie, et des Arméniens [illegible] turque sur la foi de l'Iradé ont été mis en prison; en outre, des arrestations nombreuses ont été opérées et sont encore opérées parmi les Arméniens restés à Constantinople que dans les provinces.

L'attitude du Comité pendant toutes les négociations a été parfaitement correcte, loyale, et sincère. Mais d'une part, l'ajournement indéfini de l'exécution des promesses contenues dans l'Iradé, et, d'autre part, les persécutions systématiques exercées contre nos adhérents, a obligé le Comité à mettre en doute la bonne foi du Gouvernement Impérial. Comment, en effet, expliquer autrement des faits si étrangement contradictoires? Ici, sur l'initiative du Souverain on entretient des négociations, on transmet un Iradé de teneur conciliante; là, on arrête, persécute et massacre les Arméniens sans aucun prétexte raisonnable.

Tous ces faits sont de nature à empêcher la réconciliation et l'apaisement annoncés, et, après une longue patience, nous inspirent de graves méfiances envers les prétendues bonnes dispositions du Gouvernement Impérial. Ils nous décident à rompre toute relation avec qui que ce soit des Délégués ou Représentants Impériaux.

Des négociations sont inutiles et dérisoires quand le Gouvernement viole sa parole et les engagements pris, et, après avoir donné des assurances solennelles pour la sécurité des personnes et des biens, laisse massacrer en masse les Arméniens dans le Vilayet de Bitlis, sans compter les arrestations et les persécutions sourdes opérées et exercées quotidiennement dans toutes les parties de l'Empire habitées par les Arméniens.

Quand le Comité Central a consenti à engager des négociations dues à l'initiative du Sultan, il n'avait nullement pour but l'élargissement d'une poignée de prisonniers. Peu nous importe le sort de quelques individus. Nous pouvions, le cas échéant, les sacrifier à une cause sainte: le bonheur de notre peuple. Aussi bien peut-on ajouter, s'il le faut, aux 200,000 victimes une centaine de prisonniers retenus obstinément, on ne sait pourquoi, par le Gouvernement, au mépris de la parole donnée.

L'amnistie générale, c'est peu, presque rien, et la mise en liberté d'un certain nombre d'hommes ne change guère le sort d'un peuple abominablement opprimé! Cependant, en acceptant au cours des négociations la proposition du Gouvernement, le Comité ne voulut voir dans la libération des prisonniers que l'indice d'une bonne volonté réelle et des intentions où était Sa Majesté le Sultan de procéder au rétablissement de la sécurité et d'améliorer le sort de la nation Arménienne. Ce signe de sincérité effective ne dénonçait de la part du Comité que de bien modestes exigences.

Qu'aurait perdu le Gouvernement à mettre en liberté un certain nombre d'Arméniens, quand il lui est facile d'en faire à nouveau emprisonner le double ou le décuple, s'il lui plaît?

En tenant sa parole et en respectant ses promesses, il aurait fait acte de sagesse et de bonne politique. En agissant, au contraire, comme il vient de le faire, il a perdu une occasion d'entente telle qu'il n'en avait pu jusqu'ici saisir de semblable, malgré ses efforts maintes fois renouvelés:

Cette occasion, c'est le consentement sans précédent des Comités à engager des négociations avec lui. De là pouvait sortir pour le Gouvernement et pour le pays une période de bonheur et de tranquillité, et par la mauvaise foi et l'inexécution des promesses Impériales en aboutit à une rupture qui peut avoir les plus graves conséquences.

Nous en rejetons toute la responsabilité sur le Gouvernement et sur les conseillers intéressés de Yildiz Kiosk. Cependant, vu les suites graves d'une rupture finale le Comité se fait un devoir de conscience d'assigner un délai dernier de douze jours pour l'exécution pleine et entière des engagements pris dans l'Iradé du 15 Avril. Cette exécution seule permettrait la reprise des pourparlers.

Nous prions donc votre Excellence de transmettre cette note à Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan et de considérer toutes relations comme rompues si, dans les douze jours qui suivront la remise de la présente, l'Iradé n'est pas exécuté dans sa teneur entre le Gouvernement Impérial et le Comité Central, qui désormais exclurent de ses programmes le principe de négociations quelconques avec le Gouvernement.

(Signé) (Comité Central Révolutionnaire Arménien.)

N.B.—La date de la note est omise, mais il y a tout lieu de supposer que c'est le 18 Septembre, et que remise en a été faite à l'Ambassade à Paris.

No. 46.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 3.)

(No. 508.)
Sir, *Constantinople, September 28, 1898.*

IN continuation of the despatch from this Embassy, No. 482, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, relative to the attitude of the Druses towards the Turkish Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 46.)
Sir, *Damascus, September 16, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 42 of the 18th ultimo, informing you that it was probable that Selim Effendi Naufal would be appointed Honorary Member of the Administrative Council of the vilayet as semi-official Representative of the Druses in Syria, I have now the honour to report that this concession will not be made. At the same time, it would appear that Selim Effendi will receive from the local authorities a certain amount of unofficial recognition as Representative of the Syrian Druses in all matters which concern them or their welfare.

I might mention, in this connection, that Ibrahim Feizi Pasha, the newly-appointed Mutessarif of the Hauran, paid a visit to Damascus quite recently, in order to consult the Vali on the present phase of the Druse question in that sandjak, and it is reported, though with what amount of truth I cannot say, that as a result of his visit two additional battalions of troops will shortly be sent to the Hauran.

As regards the question of the payment of tithes by the Druses of the Jebel, on which I have written to Her Majesty's Embassy on several occasions, I am informed that, in reality, the Druses have no intention of making any such payments, unless force be brought to bear on them in such a way as to be irresistible. It remains to be seen whether they will persist in so foolish a line of conduct now that the Government has shown itself willing to treat all their real claims and grievances with a fresh assurance and consideration which they have never hitherto received.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 47.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 3.)

(No. 514.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 28, 1898.*

IN his despatches No. 391 of the 7th June, and No. 415 of the 21st June last, Mr. de Bunsen had the honour to inform your Lordship of the negotiations which took place between the Russian and Turkish Governments, on the subject of the return of the Armenians who took refuge in Russia last year.

On the 25th instant I received a telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van informing me that according to telegrams from Melasgird to the Turkish authorities, "fighting had been going on for several days with Armenians, supposed to have come from Russia. Nine Armenians had escaped, forty had been killed. The loss on the Turkish side was given as one officer and nine men, besides some Kurds."

On the 27th instant information was received at the Porte from the Vali of Bitlis, to the effect that a party of about sixty Armenians, presumably Russian subjects, had penetrated the Turkish frontier from the Russian side towards Moush, where they came into contact with the troops and tribesmen, fifteen being killed on the Turkish side. Some of the Armenians were conducted to Bitlis, where the Vali had been ordered to examine them.

The Vali gave his opinion that these are not Turkish Armenian refugees returning from Russia, but an armed band of revolutionary fanatics who have crossed the border.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 48.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 5.)

(No. 515.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 29, 1898.*

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 502 of the 16th instant, and previous correspondence, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the British Vice-Consul at Hodeida relating to the affairs of the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Vice-Consul Ahmed to Consul Devey.

(No. 51.)
Sir, *Hodeida, August 11, 1898.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 44 of the 25th July last, I have the honour to report that about a fortnight ago some camels, carrying about 148 bags of rations for soldiers in the interior, were seized by Arab tribes of Megurda, who live beyond Bagel.

Two battalions of soldiers were sent, but only 24 bags were recovered, 58 persons of the above tribe taken prisoners, 20 villages, of about 180 houses in each, burnt, and men, women, and children put to death.

The principal seat of disturbance at present is at Kophol, a mountainous place near Lohya, which is about two and a-half days' journey from Hodeida.

A few days ago Turkish gun-boat "Showket Nama" landed at Lohya for Kophol two mountain guns, and 100 cases of ammunitions, and three transport vessels, "Kaiser," "Tarsus," "Ismyr" carried there 740, 735, and 1,375 soldiers respectively for the above-mentioned Kophol.

Within a few days steam-ship "Tarsus" is going to take from this place provisions for soldiers at Lohya, Farsan, and Comfida.

Corvette "Iskender" and gun-boats "Showket Nama" and "Zuc Dara" are

expected very shortly here to facilitate the conveyance of soldiers, rations, and ammunitions to various sea-ports in the Yemen for the interior, because camels and mules for the above purposes are not to be had at Hodeida for transport service in the interior, and in many places roads are not safe, as will be seen from the first paragraph of this despatch.

In my opinion, at this time it is advisable to have a British man-of-war here, either to stay a few days at Hodeida, or at least to come here and cruise about the place for a little while.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. U. AHMED.

No. 49.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 528.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 6, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit an interesting Report of Mr. Vice-Consul Crow on the state of affairs in the Lebanon.

Mr. Crow points out that, while the conditions of life and the conflicting interests of the rival races and creeds remain the same as before, the spread of education has produced an increased feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction. He speaks highly of Naoum Pasha, the Governor of the Lebanon, whose reappointment has been on the whole favourably received by the population.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 49.

Vice-Consul Crow to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Beirout, September 23, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a Memorandum on the affairs of the Lebanon containing information which I received during my recent visit to Beiteddin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 49.

Memorandum by Vice-Consul Crow.

AS authorized by Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires' telegram of the 31st August, 1898, I availed myself of Naoum Pasha's invitation to spend a few days at Beiteddin, the country seat of the Lebanese Government. From Beiteddin I proceeded to Bakleen, the official residence of the Kaimakam of the Shouf, Mir Mustapha Arslan, and also to Jedeideh, and returned the visits of Sheikh Mohamed Hamadi and Sheikh Mohamed Tafiah, the two religious heads of the Druses. I also visited Moukhtara, where I was the guest of the Jumblatt family.

Naoum Pasha, who was reappointed Governor-General of the Lebanon in August 1897, has just completed the first year of the second period of his administration. A cursory glance at the condition of the population under his rule, their aims and aspirations, may, therefore, not be devoid of interest.

The promises given by the Ottoman Government in the Protocol of 1892 referred, chiefly, to the independence of the elections of members of the Administrative Council, and to the protection of Magistrates from dismissal without proper inquiry. Members are elected to the Administrative Council for a term of six years, and elections will be held next March to fill up the places of four members, whose term of office will have then expired, namely, two Druses, one Maronite, and one Greek Catholic. Of these Hamid Bey, Druse member for the Shouf, has, I am informed, the greatest chance of re-election.

The question of the division of the Shoof Kaimakamlik (Druse) and the formation of a new Christian Kaimakamlik, by annexing certain Shoof villages to Deir-el-Camar, was unfavourably viewed by the Government, and seems to have been dropped for the present. The project, which was put forward by the Maronites, was vigorously supported by a certain Habib, a Maronite Notable, for the furtherance of his own ends. The Maronite villagers appear to be without initiative in the matter, and the support given to it was chiefly due to the self-interested exertions of Habib and his party.

An arrangement was made with the Ottoman Régie last year, by which a monopoly for five years was granted to that institution, for the import into the Lebanon of foreign-grown tumbeki. The privileges of the inhabitants of the mountain were not interfered with by the arrangement, as the internal production of tumbeki remained unaffected. The scheme was, however, opposed by a certain class, who foresaw in it the defeat of their own plans for making a profit by the sale of tumbeki. Their opposition seems to have been purely self-interested, though the terms which they offered appear on the surface to be more favourable to the Lebanon Government than those accepted. The scheme is not showing great results at present. The profit accruing to the Administration depends on the quantity of tumbaki consumed, a tax of 2 piastres per kilog being paid to the Government, and, as much of the old stock still remains on the hands of the sellers, this will have to be consumed before more is required. The results will probably be more perceptible next year, when better receipts are expected. The Lebanon Government is taking active measures to check smuggling.

Emigration from the Lebanon is at present small. The orders against it are enforced and it is only practised secretly. About two-thirds of those who leave, return as soon as they have made sufficient money to purchase property of their own.

Satisfaction at the reappointment of Naoum Pasha as Governor, though not universal, is widely felt. His rule is just and benign, and though his administration does not not seem to have been marked by any radical improvement in the government of the mountain, he appears to thoroughly understand the importance of preserving the balance between the conflicting elements, of which the various sects and denominations under his jurisdiction are composed.

The party out of office is always discontented, and those who have held office before leave no stone unturned in order to damage the credit of their more fortunate rivals. It is therefore impossible to content everybody in a small but mixed community, where employment under Government is regarded as the summit of ambition. If party interests could be sacrificed to the public welfare the task of government in the mountain would be considerably lightened, but, as it is, the difficulties of administration are aggravated by the petty intrigues and jealousies, to which Maronites, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Druses, Moslems, and the other inhabitants of the Lebanon are too easily prone. If a wider scope for the activity of the rising generation were afforded much of this would naturally disappear; but, unfortunately, there seems no chance of it.

The well-intentioned efforts of missionaries have lavished education on classes, who, in past years, were content to press oil and scratch the soil for the cultivation of the mulberry and the vine, and who could neither read nor write. The band has been removed from their eyes, but the field of their activity remains unchanged. Both area and occupation are required, in which their moral and intellectual resources can find development, and until such outlets are provided, the result must of necessity be emigration or internal unrest.

The openings for skilled labour in the mountain are inadequate to meet the demand for employment. The population, too, are, by the force of circumstances, as long as they remain in the mountain, inert and without enterprise. Naoum Pasha endeavoured a short while ago to promote competition and encourage native productions, and for this purpose he proposed to open an industrial exhibition at Babda, the seat of government, where specimens of all Lebanon products were to be exhibited. The inhabitants, however, with a few exceptions, refused even to send in their exhibits without payment, and the scheme was dropped.

On another occasion the Governor undertook to provide the necessary funds for replanting with trees the barren slopes of the hills which command Beiteddin, but this plan was also frustrated by the inertia of the peasants.

Even the Druse family of Jumblatt, in whom, since the events of 1860, the British Government has taken a special interest, form no exception to the rule, and, instead of [illegible] their cordial support [illegible] co-operating to raise [illegible] which they derive from their position of wealthy and extensive landowners for the public benefit, they are divided by family quarrels, and waste their energies in futile efforts to prejudice their rivals who now hold office under Government, either in the hope of supplanting them

or of neutralizing any favourable results which may be obtained under the Administration.

The need of expansion is, in fact, felt throughout the Lebanon, and it is difficult to define a remedy which would be efficient in its application. A considerable portion of the wealth of the mountain is locked up in the chests of the clergy, and many rich and productive portions of the soil being in their hands, and, being lightly taxed, contribute an all too insignificant quota to the public Treasury.

The ever increasing population, emerging from ignorance under the influence of education, demands a wider sphere of activity, and the absence of such a sphere leaves them necessarily a pray to idleness and its attendant evils of unrest and discontent.

(Signed) F. E. CROW.

Beirout, September 22, 1898.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 17.)

(No. 530.) *Constantinople, October* 10, 1898.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo relative to the failure of the crops in that district, and the disturbances resulting therefrom.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 35.) *Aleppo, September* 30, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that considerable anxiety is felt in this district respecting our food supply for next winter.

This year all the crops have failed, and it is calculated that, bad as the harvest was last year, those of the present year have fallen off at least 40 per cent.

The total wheat crop for the vilayet during 1897 was 795,000 shumbuls, and of barley 482,000 shumbuls. This year wheat yielded 520,000 shumbuls, and barley 300,000 shumbuls.

The crops have chiefly failed east of Aleppo in the villages belonging to the Tchiftlik Humayoun (Imperial Domains), where one-half of the grain land has yielded nothing, and the other half only sufficient to supply seed for the next crop.

Six hundred villages in the districts of Bab, Maskené, and Membouj have applied to the vilayet for seed, and their case has been referred to the Porte.

Added to the failure of the crops, the great mortality which occurred among the flocks owing to the severity of last winter has impoverished the Bedouins with the usual result that they refuse to pay taxes, and resort to plunder.

The state of things which I reported in my No. 31 despatch of the 2nd ultimo became very serious during August, and still preoccupies the attention of the Government.

The Abou Hamiss and Djess, sub-tribes of the Aazeh Arabs, plundered twenty-five large villages in the Cazas of Haran and Souroudj (Sandjak of Ourfa). The Hamidies would have followed suit, but the authorities succeeded in controlling them, though they have as yet been altogether unsuccessful in putting a stop to these raids by the Arabs. The military force in the Ourfa district consists of some 100 men, the greater part of whom are Monizé, mounted infantry riding mules, especially employed for service in the desert. Last week it was found necessary to reinforce these by regular cavalry from Aleppo.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 531.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 10, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 508 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, relative to the steps taken to put down robberies committed by Bedouin in the Lejah.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Consul Richards to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 48.)
Sir, *Damascus, September 27, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No 46 of the 16th instant reporting, among other things, that it was rumoured that two battalions of troops would shortly be sent to the Hauran, I have the honour to inform you that one battalion of infantry—about 400 strong—has actually left for that district, half of them to be stationed at Busra-el-Harir and the remainder at Sueda.

It would also appear that Fevzi Pasha, the Mutessarif of the Hauran, has stationed a "Mufraza," as it is termed, viz., a body of infantry soldiers mounted on mules—about 150 strong—as well as 50 regular troopers at two places in the Lejah named, respectively, Ain Hamir and Ain Kerrassa, with a view to bringing pressure to bear on the Slut Arabs, the chief Bedouin tribe of that region. Moreover, I understand that the Mutessarif has gone himself quite recently into the Lejah, accompanied by a number of Moslem and Christian Sheikhs from the Hauran, with the object of inducing these Arabs to restore to their rightful owners the camels, cattle and sheep which they have carried off from time to time. It would appear that Fevzi Pasha has already succeeded in obtaining the restitution of thirty-five camels, as well as fourteen loads of wheat, which had been stolen from the district of Kunetra. I am informed that the Vali's instructions to the Mutessarif were not to employ force except in the last resource.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 532.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 11, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 514 of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit copies of two despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, giving an account of the recent Armenian raid into the country to the north of Lake Van. Mr. Graves points out that this is the first revolutionary incursion since 1896. The Turkish authorities claim to have put it down without inflicting any ill-treatment upon the Armenian inhabitants of the districts affected, but Mr. Graves' narrative is derived from information furnished by the Vali of Erzeroum, and he considers that judgment should be suspended until further evidence comes in.

The prisoners are said to have spoken of two other bands which were to have entered Turkish territory at the same time as the one which has been destroyed, but no definite intelligence has been received with regard to them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 52.

Consul Graves to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September 23, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report that about the 16th or 17th instant a band of Armenian revolutionaries crossed the Russian frontier, coming probably from Kaghizman, and made for Tutakh, on the Eastern Euphrates, near which place they took up their quarters in a cave. They were observed and attacked by a band of Kurds, and in the fight which ensued, their Chief is said to have been killed, while two of their number were wounded and made prisoners. Two of the Kurds were also killed, and several wounded. The survivors of the Armenian band fled to the mountains, where they are being followed up by troops dispatched by the Vali of Erzeroum, who is now at Hassan Kalé, the capital of the Passin Caza, between Erzeroum and the Russian frontier.

This is the first incursion of Armenian revolutionaries into the Erzeroum Vilayet since November 1896, and the Armenian population of the district appears for the moment to be quite free from any taint of revolutionary agitation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 52.

Consul Graves to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September 29, 1898.*

THE Vali, Raouf Pasha, having returned to Erzeroum, his Excellency has furnished me with the following further details respecting the incursion of the band of Armenian revolutionaries, which formed the subject of my preceding despatch.

After escaping under cover of night from the cave where they were first attacked by the Ali Toroum section of the Sipikanli Kurds, the Armenians, who were fifty-five in number, pushed on in the direction of Melazgerd, the capital of the most eastern caza of the Bitlis Vilayet, and it is believed that their objective was the mountainous district of Sasun, the scene of the massacres of 1894. They were, however, hotly followed up by Hamidieh cavalry and regular infantry, and brought to bay somewhere between Tutakh and Melazgerd, in the country of the Hassanakli tribe. In the fight which ensued the revolutionaries are said to have been entirely wiped out, the two wounded prisoners mentioned in my preceding despatch being the only survivors. On the Turkish side, fourteen men (chiefly Hamidieh Kurds) were killed and a number wounded, and ten horses were also killed.

The prisoners state that their band was one of three which were to have entered Turkish territory at about the same time, and the Vali informs me that, four or five days ago, he received a telegram from the Mutessarif of Bayazid to the effect that a second revolutionary band was reported to have crossed the frontier, but subsequent intelligence from the same quarter does not confirm the story. However, as a precautionary measure, a battalion of the 27th Infantry Regiment has been sent from Erzeroum to Khinis, and an experienced cavalry officer, Mirza Bey, has been dispatched with eighty regular cavalry to patrol the frontier districts of Passin and Delibabor.

The Vali claims that the suppression of this revolutionary band has been accomplished without any severities or ill-treatment being inflicted upon the Armenian inhabitants of the district affected.

As, however, Raouf Pasha depends for his information upon the Turkish local authorities and the Hamidieh Chiefs concerned in the affair, and as rumours to the contrary are current among the Christians here, it will, perhaps, be better to suspend judgment on this point until confirmatory evidence is obtainable.

I hear that the Vali has proposed that the Kurdish Chiefs engaged should receive a pecuniary reward for their services, instead of the customary decorations and promotions in grade, to the conferring of which in such cases his Excellency is strongly opposed in principle.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 533.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 12, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 515 of the 29th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the British Vice-Consul at Hodeida on the subject of the disturbances in the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Vice-Consul Ahmed to Consul Devey.

(No. 55.)
Sir, *Hodeida, September 7, 1898.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 51 of the 14th August, 1898, I have the honour to report that news reached me to the effect that about twenty-five days ago two places in the northern side of the interior of the Yemen, named Dafeer and Shahre, near Kophol, the principal seat of war, have been taken from the Turks, and their soldiers killed by rebel Arabs. In the southern Yemen, in Anis and Err, fighting between Turks and Arabs is still going on.

Transport steam-ship "Adana" brought here 800 Redifs and 170 recruits.

Gun-boat "Zair Darin" arrived here on the 4th of this month, and transport "Babyl," which came to Hodeida the same day with over 1,000 soldiers on board of her, is gone to Lohya with the above, and two guns and two battalions from Hodeida. From Lohya the soldiers, with guns, will start for Kophol, where, per transport "Kaiser," two battalions of troops and some provisions, have already been sent.

A Commission has been appointed here to make every well-to-do Turkish subject of this place to buy a certain number of camels and hire them for Government service.

Steam-ship "Signis Waglou," flying Osmanli flag, arrived here laden with 20,000 bags of flour and 800 cases of butter for the troops in the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. U. AHMED.

No. 54.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 17.)

(No. 534. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 12, 1898.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 506, Confidential, of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to state that further papers have reached me, from the same source as before, showing that the Armenian Committee in Paris were still, at the beginning of this month, resolved to break off all correspondence with the Ottoman Embassy unless full effect were given to the promised amnesty. The Committee has sent in a list containing the names of seventeen Armenian prisoners, twelve of whom are still in the prisons of Constantinople, and the remainder in those of Tripoli, Adana, and Erzinghian. Their release is peremptorily demanded as a preliminary to any further discussion. Failing compliance on this point, the Committee threaten to leave Paris within a week, and to address a Memorandum to the Powers and to the press setting forth the promises made to them by the Imperial Iradé, and the extent to which they remain unfulfilled.

The Palace seems inclined to yield. The Armenian Committee has been informed, by telegraph, that their demands are admitted in principle, and I understand that the Sultan is inclined to release the Constantinople prisoners mentioned in the list, and to consult the local Governors with regard to the remainder.

From the same quarter I hear that a telegram has been received at the Porte from

the Ottoman Minister at Washington stating that the Armenian Committee of New York has decided to address a Petition to the German Emperor, and to take advantage of his visit to the Sultan to provoke some disturbance in Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 55.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 548.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 22, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 521 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting robberies committed by Slut Arabs.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 55.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir, *Damascus, October 9, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th ultimo, reporting the acts of robbery committed by the Slut Arabs, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that Fevzi Pasha, the Mutessarif of the Hauran, arrived recently in Damascus, bringing with him nine Sheikhs belonging to this tribe, in order that they might be seen and reprimanded by the Vali. His Excellency at first imprisoned these men, but on being informed by Fevzi Pasha that he had guaranteed them their personal liberty, and that it was only on this condition that he had been able to bring them to Damascus, they were set at liberty. Subsequently, they were permitted to leave the city after giving Nazim Pasha a formal assurance that they would abstain from robbery in the future.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 551.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 24, 1898.*

A FEW days ago two gentlemen representing the Committee appointed to look after the interests of those British subjects who have sustained serious losses by the Armenian massacres called upon me to inquire whether there was any chance of the Turkish Government settling these claims, and to request my assistance in the matter.

I replied that I was sorry to say that the last note from the Sublime Porte on the subject was very unsatisfactory and held out no hope of a settlement, but that the question was not lost sight of, and that they might be sure that the claims of British subjects would be pressed very strongly, particularly if any claims of a similar nature were recognized and paid by the Porte to any other Government.

I have since spoken to the United States' Minister, Mr. Straus, on the subject. He tells me that he has received positive instructions from his Government to insist upon a settlement of his claims, that public feeling in regard to them is very high in his country, and that he believes his Government is resolved to have recourse to force for their settlement in case diplomatic action should prove unsuccessful. He said he proposed telling the Sultan, at his first private audience, that the consequences would be very serious if he refused an amicable understanding, and that he hoped to persuade His Majesty to propose Arbitration as a way, and perhaps the only way, out of the difficulty.

Mr. Straus asked me if I would agree to this, I replied that I believed Her

Majesty's Government would be inclined to do so in co-operation with the United States, and, if possible, the other Governments who had similar claims, but that I must take your Lordship's instructions before giving a definite answer.

I have spoken to several of my colleagues in regard to these claims, and though they have admitted their justice, and the necessity of insisting upon a settlement, I found when I hinted at a definite and joint representation, that no one was willing to take up the question without renewed instructions from his Government. It is very probable, however, that most of the Governments concerned will accept a proposal for Arbitration

It will be energetically resisted by the Sultan at first, but if the United States' Government is in earnest, I have no doubt it will be eventually accepted by His Majesty, and as I see no immediate prospect of otherwise settling the question, I venture to think that co-operation with the United States will be to our advantage.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)

(No. 560.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 27, 1898.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 205 of the 24th instant, relative to the attack on Dr. Belck in the Van Vilayet, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship a précis of the telegrams from Captain Elliot in regard to this matter, and also a copy of a letter which I have just received from the German Embassy on the subject.

I at once telegraphed to Captain Elliot in the sense desired by Herr von Schlözer.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 57.

Précis of Telegrams from Captain Elliot.

ON the 18th October Captain Elliot reported that a German subject, Dr. Belck, who was travelling in the Van district for scientific purposes, had been attacked and left for dead on Mount Sipan by Hamidieh retainers of Hussein Pasha Haideranli.

It appears that on the 13th October, at Argish, Dr. Belck called on the Kaïmakam, told him his plans, and asked for an escort. The interview took place in the presence of several of Hussein Pasha's Hamidieh.

The next day, the 14th, he had strayed from his escort, when he was met and decoyed into a lonely ravine by a Hamidieh Captain. This man, after robbing and partially stripping him, fired a bullet into his face, the bullet cutting his ear. Dr. Belck dropped and feigned death. Two more shots were fired point blank at him, one bullet grazing the left side of his neck. After striking him with a rifle to ascertain whether he was dead, the assailants left, and the doctor returned to the village he had just left, and after some delay proceeded to Adeljivas. On his approach to the town after dark he found an ambush of nineteen Kurds waiting for him, but as he was in Kurdish dress, his own clothes being stolen, they let him pass. These men had been waiting for some time, and four hours before had killed an Armenian on the same spot. Dr. Belck was not seriously hurt.

On the 20th Captain Elliot telegraphed again. He stated that the preliminary inquiry was held in Dr. Belck's room, in the presence of the British Vice-Consul, there being no German Representative at Van, and Dr. Belck having asked him to undertake the duty.

In Captain Elliot's opinion the responsibility of Hussein Pasha for the outrage is undoubted, for any one not under the Pasha's protection travelling was dangerous, and the Government was quite powerless. It was absolutely necessary that the Vali should receive imperative instructions from Constantinople. The ambush was probably set by a nephew of Hussein Pasha. It was rumoured that the Kurds wished to murder the doctor because they thought he was German Consul and a sympathizer with the Armenians.

The Armenian who was killed was in charge of the doctor's luggage.

In a further telegram, dated the 21st, Captain Elliot stated that the inquiry was being proceeded with, but that unless the principal Kurds in the neighbourhood were got under control, it was evident that time would only be wasted. The Vali's intentions were good, but he was powerless.

On the 24th October the Vali informed Captain Elliot that a large amount of property belonging to Dr. Belck had been found in the house of a certain enemy of Hussein Pasha. Captain Elliot thinks that until Hussein is removed it will be impossible to get any evidence against him. He added that it was quite clear that the Kurds took the doctor for a German Consul, and that the most serious aspect of the affair was the ambuscade.

Inclosure 2 in No. 57.

Herr von Schlözer to Sir N. O'Conor.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Péra, le 26 Octobre, 1898.*

L'AMBASSADE Impériale d'Allemagne a eu l'honneur de recevoir les communications que votre Excellence a bien voulu lui faire le 19 et le 20 de ce mois au sujet de l'attentat commis dans le Vilayet de Van sur la personne du savant Allemand, Dr. Belck, et s'empresse de vous exprimer, dans ses remerciements pour les soins précieux que M. le Capitaine Elliot a accordés dans cette circonstance à la protection des intérêts Allemands.

A la suite des démarches faites par l'Ambassade Impériale, le Vali de Van a reçu, d'après l'ordre de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, l'instruction de procéder sérieusement à une enquête rigoureuse sur les faits de faire connaître ici les noms de tous les coupables et de prononcer sommairement la condamnation. En même temps Sa Majesté le Sultan a exprimé sa gracieuse intention de faire attribuer à M. Belck une large indemnité pour les outrages qu'il a subis.

Je viens, par conséquent, prier votre Excellence de bien vouloir communiquer le contenu de ces instructions à M. le Capitaine Elliot et de le charger de continuer ses démarches en veillant à l'exécution des ordres donnés au Vali de Van.

En réitérant à votre Excellence mes remercîments pour l'intérêt témoigné dans cette circonstance par l'autorité Consulaire Britannique, je saisis, &c.

(Signé) VON SCHLÖZER.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 563. Secret.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 30, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship copy of a Petition which has reached me from a secret source, addressed by the Hintchag Armenian Committee of Constantinople to the German Emperor on the occasion of his visit to the Sultan.

The Petition reminds His Imperial Majesty that twenty years ago, at the capital of the German Empire, the Powers of Europe solemnly guaranteed the safety of the Armenian populations of Turkey, and that three years ago Europe allowed the Turks to massacre 300,000 innocent Armenians.

The Emperor will see on his progress through Constantinople, Cæsarea, and Jerusalem thousands of Armenian orphans, and if he cares to question impartial witnesses, he will hear of such horrors as will perhaps induce him to exercise his influence on behalf of the sufferers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in *No. 58.*

Petition addressed to His Majesty the German Emperor.

Sire,

LE Comité Hintchakiste Arménien de Constantinople prie votre Majesté de vouloir bien examiner de près pendant votre passage par la Turquie la douloureuse et intolérable situation faite au peuple Arménien par les conditions barbares du régime actuel.

Une étude impartiale ferait voir à votre Majesté à quel point les revendications des Arméniens sont justes et légales. Loin d'être des perturbateurs et des agitateurs, comme [illegible] des multivalidance ont le droit [illegible] Arméniens, [illegible] le travailleur et industriel, et qui constituent un élément de vie et de civilisation dans l'Empire Ottoman, [illegible] l'Europe [illegible] Pour le bien de l'Europe [illegible] Turquie, [illegible] Pour régime de civilisation Européenne dans ce pays où survit encore le hideux despotisme Asiatique.

Au Congrès de 1878, qui a eu lieu dans la capitale même de l'Empire Allemand, les Arméniens ont présenté leurs doléances qu'ils basent sur le respect des droits humains les plus élémentaires.

L'article [illegible] garantit la sécurité de la vie, de l'honneur, et des biens aux Arméniens persécutés par les Kurdes [illegible] Circassiens.

Le voyage de votre Majesté en Turquie serait le commencement d'une vie nouvelle pour ce pays, d'une ère de progrès et de régénérescence si votre passage était marqué par une contribution puissante à l'établissement de la justice et de l'ordre dans l'Empire Ottoman. L'Arménie [illegible] des peuples [illegible] Arménie [illegible] Majesté [illegible] d'Empereur [illegible] pour [illegible] rendue à une population monstrueusement opprimée. L'Europe devrait couronner [sic] avec le désespoir suprême d'un peuple qui lutte de milliers d'années pour son existence et pour la civilisation.

Le Comité Hintchakiste de Constantinople a le ferme espoir que votre Majesté voudra bien, dans un noble sentiment de justice et d'humanité, prendre en considération les doléances du peuple Arménien, et que son passage solennel par la Turquie aura pour résultat l'exécution loyale de réformes déjà reconnues par l'Europe entière comme indispensable pour la pacification de la Turquie.

L. Gouvernement Turc a été [illegible] cette époque [illegible] rigueurs envers les Arméniens; il a ouvertement encouragé les Kurdes et les Circassiens à les harceler de plus belle et l'Europe a complètement oublié ses engagements.

Il y a trouvé [illegible] l'Europe [illegible] 300,000 Arméniens, parce qu'à certains endroits quelques coups d'Arménien [illegible] ont été défendus par les armes contre des hordes de Kurdes officiellement armées et que la nation Arménienne avait protesté hautement contre le martyre horrible auquel on l'avait condamnée.

Ce crime colossal, cette tentative d'anéantissement d'un peuple tout entier, a provoqué [illegible] naturellement des représailles désespérées de la part des Arméniens, qui voulaient sauver l'indépendance de leur [illegible] et [illegible].

Votre Majesté verra sur son passage à Constantinople, à Césarée, et à Jérusalem des milliers d'orphelins Arméniens, et si des témoins non-suspects sont interrogés, elle entendra des récits d'horreurs commises, qui la feront frémir. . . . . Nous espérons bien que cette [illegible] et injuste [illegible] peuple Chrétien, [illegible] pour sa religion, pour sa tendance à la civilisation, saura émouvoir le cœur d'un des plus grands Monarques de l'Islam que Chrétienne.

Le Comité Hintchakiste Arménien de Constantinople

Le 18 October, 1896.

No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 564.)

Constantinople, October 30, 1896.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's despatch No. 225 of the 14th instant, inclosing copy of a letter from the Armenian Relief Committee, asking to be informed whether there was any hope of the recovery of the money robbed from the late Yussuf Yunan at Sairt.

I have received no answer from the Porte to the note which was addressed to them from this Embassy on the 2nd August last, in the sense of your Lordship's despatch No. 160 of the 22nd July, informing them that the evidence to hand which incriminates certain Turkish officials cannot be rebutted without a formal and searching inquiry; and that until the charge of complicity of Turkish officials in the murder is disproved, Her Majesty's Government must hold the Porte responsible for the money that has disappeared.

In view of the probability that the Porte will return a negative answer, or no answer at all, to the representations which have been made in the name of Her Majesty's Government, I have been led to consider what further steps should be taken to press this claim. On a review of the evidence, it appeared to me that it was doubtful whether, from the point of view of legal value, the claim against the Turkish Government could be urged as a claim justified by proved facts. I therefore referred the question to Sir E. O'Malley, requesting him to inform me whether, in his opinion, the threats which are said to have been used by the Mutessarif and the Public Prosecutor towards Yussuf Yunan shortly before the murder and robbery would be sufficient evidence to support a claim for the stolen money against those persons in a Court of Law. Sir E. O'Malley has now informed me, after a review of the correspondence, that he is clearly of opinion that there is not sufficient evidence to prove that these officials were implicated in the robbery; and he entirely concurs in Mr. Crow's opinion (expressed in his despatch of the 25th November, 1897), that "without some tangible proof it would be useless to raise the question" of their complicity.

Under the circumstances it appears to me that the claim must be pressed, if at all, on political grounds, and not as a legal obligation of the Porte in consequence of the proved complicity of Turkish officials in the robbery of British property. I do not anticipate any useful result from a note to the Porte, pressing for an answer to the previous demand. The course which I would therefore propose to adopt, with your Lordship's approval, would be to press strongly for a settlement in personal verbal representations to Tewfik Pasha and the Grand Vizier in the first instance, and to be guided by their answers to such verbal representations as to the wording of any subsequent note which I might see my way to address to the Porte. I should propose to accept in full settlement of the claim the sum of 20,000 piastres, which the Sublime Porte states was the amount of the relief money which was in the possession of Yussuf Yunan at the time of his murder, although I think it extremely doubtful that the Yunan at the time of his murder, although I think it extremely doubtful that the Porte will grant it. In case, as is probable, the Porte refuses, I do not think that more can be done than to enter the case on the list of the unsettled claims advanced by Her Majesty's Government to be subsequently settled at some favourable opportunity.

With regard to the 100*l.* given by the Armenian Relief Committee to the relations of the late Yussuf Yunan, it would, in my opinion, be useless to press the Turkish Government for reimbursement. The advance of this sum was probably under the circumstances as charitable a way of employing the relief fund as could well be found, but no persuasion could induce the Turkish Government to see that they are bound to refund.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 60.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 576.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 3, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 560 of the 27th, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Captain Elliot, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, forwarding Dr. Belck's narrative of the attack made on him by Haideranli Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 60.

Captain Elliot to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Van, October 10, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith Dr. Belck's narrative of the attack on him on Mount Sepan by Haiderani Kurds, servants of Hoscin Pasha.

That the doctor escaped death was not due to any merciful intentions on the part of his assailants. They were hurried over their work and bungled it.

I can personally testify to the danger of travelling in those parts, and to the impotence and timidity of the Turkish Government. Zaptiehs are useless unless Hoscin Pasha supplies men as well—a precaution I did not take.

I cannot help thinking Hoscin Pasha was annoyed at my visit to his territory and directly or indirectly instigated this outrage, believing Dr. Belck to be a German Consul and a sympathizer with the Armenians.

I have reported the case, as it is of general importance. Dr. Belck appealed to me for assistance, and the Vali asked me to attend the preliminary judicial inquiry.

Your Excellency is aware of Hoscin Pasha's antecedents, and will, I hope, allow me to suggest the necessity of getting rid of him as a preliminary step to be taken in this matter, which has such a serious bearing on the safety of the Christians and the welfare of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 60.

Account of an Attack on Dr. Waldemar Belck by Kurds, in the Vilayet of Van, Turkey, October 14, 1898.

ON Wednesday, the 12th October last, I arrived in Ajish about 3 P.M. Soon after, about 5 o'clock, Mustapha Effendi, the Kaïmakam, called upon me, and repeated his visit on Thursday, before 10 A.M., and I returned the call about 3 P.M. Thursday. On all these occasions a considerable number of Hussein Pasha's men were present, and were especially numerous when I called upon the Kaïmakam on Thursday at his office, and several Yuzbashis and Begs belonging to Hussein Pasha's clan were introduced by name. During each of these calls the purpose of my journey was fully discussed, and I asked the Kaïmakam to furnish me sufficient escort for the trip. Thus every one present knew definitely that I intended to ascend Sepan Dagh, starting from the village of Nor Shen, to ascertain accurately the height above the level of the sea, and to descend near Adeljevas.

Neither the Kaïmakam nor any other person present made any mention of any special risk in travelling through the region proposed. It was only said that in a subsequent journey through Malashgerd a stronger escort would be needed, as the region was infested with Kurdish brigands and murderers. Under these circumstances, I finally became content to put up with the two zaptiehs offered me by the Kaïmakam, besides whom I had with me the Own-bashe given me by the Vali of Van for the whole trip from Van and return. As I learned later on, the Kaïmakam ought to have asked from Hussein Pasha a Kurdish escort for me, lest there should be a possibility of my passing through the territory of this notorious Kurdish Chief.

So I rode off from Ajish after 4 P.M. on Thursday. Our caravan consisted of myself, my Dragoman, Yervant Aprahamovich (Russian), two Armenian servants of Dr. Raynolds, from Van, named Baghdasar and Markar, the Own-bashe, and the two zaptiehs, altogether ten horses. On Thursday we marched about 25 kilom. to the Kurdish village Gurgus, where we spent the night.* On Friday morning, soon after 9 o'clock, we started on, and about 10·45 A.M. found ourselves opposite the village of Nor Shen. Here I divided the caravan, the baggage horses, with Dr. Raynolds' two servants, accompanied by one of the Ajish zaptiehs, took the direct route to Adeljivas, while I, accompanied by my Dragoman, the Own-bashe, and the other zaptieh, rode to Nor Shen, in order to procure guides for the ascent; but this we failed to accomplish, the Armenian peasants of the village absolutely refusing to go, fearing to be murdered by Hussein Pasha's men, who were camping on the Mount. So, about 11·15 A.M. we started on alone, as the route for the ascent seemed pretty plain, and I have had some experience in mountain climbing. About 1 P.M. we reached the hamlet of Perto, the sole inhabitant of which is a Kurdish Agha, named Mahamet Effendi Verkhan Oghloo, with his family and numerous dependents. This man is a follower of Ahmet Beg, of Kesia, a nephew of Hussein Pasha. Consequently this man (Mahamet Verkhan Oghloo) is under Hussein Pasha's command. I asked Mahamet Effendi to give me guides for the ascent, but he refused, under the pretext that he had no men at his disposal, though he was surrounded by four or five Kurdish servants. I then asked him to allow at least one man to go with us as far as to the snow-line, who should hold the horses during the time of our absence in going to the summit and returning, but this, too, he refused under the same pretext. The breakfast he offered us I declined in order to save time.

So we rode on alone from Perto, about 1 P.M. In order to understand the following description, it will be necessary to refer to the accompanying sketch. At first we had to climb the low ridge (A), rising obliquely between Perto and Sepan Dagh. For this purpose I rode up the sloping side of the mountain (B). My way is indicated by the dotted line . . . . ., but my companions kept a little below me on the line marked - - - - -, and after a little they called to me saying they had found a practicable road, and asking me to join them; and as my road proved full of stones and boulders, I decided to do so. But my men, instead of waiting for me, continued to ascend through a small ravine, so that I lost sight of them entirely. About this time I noticed on the road leading from Perto to Keïr a considerable caravan of laden oxen, &c., a short distance in advance of which two horsemen were moving slowly forward. As I learned from my men later on, one of the two horsemen had asked them, "Who are you?" They answered, "Asker." "Where are you going, and what are you about?" Answer, "We are accompanying the German Consul up Sepan Dagh." On this the two horsemen continued their way. Now, when I arrived near the road leading to Kesir, and failed to see my men anywhere, I asked the drivers of the above-mentioned caravan which way my men had gone. They pointed to a small ravine filled with large boulders, beside which I noticed another parallel ravine with level soil, and I questioned if one might ascend by this ravine, and they answered in the affirmative, and I started up this ravine. When I reached the point designated by ———, I heard some one behind me repeatedly calling "Gel, gel" ("Come, come"), and turning round, I noticed that one the two horsemen before mentioned rode towards me. These two men, who had before been ahead of the caravan, had then been stopping on the summit of a ridge, as if waiting for the caravan; one of these two men now came towards me, while the other remained on a small height, designated by ———. At first I did not suppose the call was addressed to me, but quietly continued my way, but when I heard the "Gel, gel" repeated, I stopped, and noticed that the horseman waiting on the near height was dressed in the uniform of a Turkish soldier, and so I asked, "What is the matter?" Now the other horseman—poorly dressed, in the costume of an ordinary Kurd—continued to come towards me, calling "Gel, gel." As I had not seen my men for a long time, I asked if they had gone in that direction, and he answered in the affirmative, and I followed him towards the other horseman, and coming nearer I saw that his uniform was that of a Hamedieh Yuz-bashe.

This entirely dissipated any doubt as to the character of the two horsemen, I deeming them patrols in search of robbers or Armenian revolutionists, such as we often meet here. This officer told me that my men had gone another way, and he would conduct me to them. He appeared very friendly, so I followed him without any hesitation. During the conversation which followed, I asked him if he were a Yuz-bashe, and he assented. I asked him to what village he belonged, and he pointed to Kesir. Later I asked him where his house was, and he replied, "I have no house," and this awakened my suspicion, and this was increased, when in reply to my question as to his name, he replied, "I have none." At the same time I felt rather than saw that the Kurdish attendant riding at my side was meddling with my saddle-bags.

Soon, riding forward to his Chief, he showed him something which he had certainly taken from them. It was now clear to me that I had fallen into the hands of two Kurdish robbers, but it was too late to fly, or to attempt any resistance, for I had only a small revolver on my person, while the two robbers, riding respectively before and behind me, had their rifles in readiness. Neither could I think of calling to my men, since this would have immediately elicited a shot from the Kurd behind me. So I quietly rode on with the two robbers, who led me constantly further and further down. They evidently wished to interpose as many ridges as possible between me and my zaptiehs. In the meantime I endeavoured to make it clear to the robbers who I was, in order, at least, to prevent their going to the extreme of murder. Consequently, I asked the Yuz-bashe if he knew I was a German Consul, for, according to my experience, only European Consuls can travel here with some degree of safety, and without being attacked by the Kurds. The Yuz-bashe assented, saying, "Evet." I also told them that I had large teskereh from the Sultan, and he again replied, "Evet."

During this time, the robbers, constantly driving on my horse, had conducted me from 1½ to 1¾ kilom. from the place where we first met. We now passed behind a somewhat higher ridge, invisible from above, where my men would probably be, and this seemed to the robbers a suitable place for executing their purpose. The Yuz-bashe and his attendant now dismounted, ordered me to do the same, and then the Yuz-bashe began to rob me. At first he asked, with every piece, "What is this?" and, receiving my answer, replied, "Give it." He began with the chronometer, then took the compass, the small photographic apparatus, the eye-glasses, the revolver, and barometer, after which he proceeded to rifle my pockets with his own hand, and took everything, even those objects which were utterly useless to him. In vain I asked him to leave with me such necessary things as the barometer, the eye-glasses, the compass, and the photographic apparatus. He even took my note-books, containing the results of our investigations, as well as the information that had been communicated to me during this five months' journey, concerning the places where inscriptions, as yet unpublished, were to be found.

Both were constantly saying, "Para vèr, para vèr" (give money), although the Yuz-bashe had already taken my purse, filled with Turkish gold and Russian notes. I said, "I have no more money; I have given all." But they did not believe me, drew off my coat, and boots, and trousers partly, searching for more money. Then the Yuz-bashe, who had now mounted his horse, said, "Give the 'yapoonja,'" and while I was busy loosening this, he, standing very near me on the other side of my horse, was slowly lifting his rifle. I said, "Don't do that, since I have given you everything," but in vain—he raised the rifle higher and fired. At the moment of his firing the gun, I must have turned my head a little to one side, for the ball only grazed my left ear. I had sufficient presence of mind to fall at once to the earth, like a dead man, whereupon a second shot was fired at me, which, as I was lying on my right side, injured my neck on the left side. The gun was so near that the palm of my right hand, which had fallen in front of my face, was filled with numerous grains of powder. Then the servant fired once more, but, I think, without hitting me. Thereupon the servant came near, and, with his full force, struck me just below the heart with the butt of his gun to ascertain if I was dead. Notwithstanding the fearful pain, I did not move. The Kurds believed I was dead, and rode away as quickly as possible. They were in a great hurry, because I had repeatedly said to them, "Make haste, my zaptiehs will soon be here." This I had done, fearing they would shoot me as soon as my men should appear.

Thus the Kurds had only left me shirt, trousers, and vest. After the Kurds had ridden away I waited some minutes, then I lifted my head, and seeing no one, I began slowly to creep over the next ridge. I did not venture to walk, because I feared the Kurds might wait, hidden behind some rock, in order to see if my people came, and would fire upon me once more on seeing me.

Soon after this I reached the road leading from Perto to Kusir. This I followed up to Perto, where I went into the house of Mehmet Effendi, telling him what had happened. When I told him that one of the robbers had the uniform of Yuz-bashe,

he uttered an "Ah!" full of meaning, and began to talk in an undertone with another Kurdish Agha, one of his relatives.

I do not doubt that both Mehmet Agha and his relative know perfectly who the robbers were. Then Mehmet Effendi went away to find a horse for me, while the women prepared some roast meat for me. Each of the two Kurdish Aghas lent me a jacket, one a Kurdish garment, the other his Hamedian uniform jacket. Then we mounted our horses, and began to climb up the ridges in order to see where my people were.

We soon found them on the height of a neighbouring ridge, where all three were stopping, with their horses. The two Kurdish Aghas wished to ride on with me and my men, saying that we would follow and find the robbers; but I felt too much worn, and hence resolved to Perto, accompanied by my Dragoman and one of the zaptiehs.

Soon after this the other zaptieh returned with the two Kurdish Aghas, accompanied by seven armed mounted Kurds. Those were Ahmet Beg, a nephew of Hussein Pasha, with six men under his command. They came directly from Kusir, and brought my horse. One of the two Kurds who came was missing.

My Dragoman greatly astonished that the Kurds had brought my horse, asked "Where do you get the horse?" Answer: "From Kusir."

"How is it that you bring the horse?" Answer: "We heard that a German Consul had been attacked, robbed, and killed, and so we have ridden up the mountain, where we found the horse which we now bring."

"Who told you that the German Consul had been murdered?" No answer.

"How is it that you know this, unless the robbers belong to your own men, and have told you? How could you know that there was a stray horse unless the robbers brought it to you themselves? How is it that you come up here, some 8 or 9 kilom., and bring the horse just to Perto, unless the robbers told you that the German Consul came from Perto?" No answer.

According to the opinion of my Dragoman, the would-be murderers, who belonged to Ahmet Beg's men, and acted upon his orders, had brought the horse to Kusir. Ahmet Beg, however, feared that the horse with an English saddle and bridle might be seen in the village and help to find the instigator of the outrage, and so Ahmet Beg had come to leave the horse near the body of the murdered man, so that no one should suspect the men of Kusir, lying so far away; but the Kurds, not finding me at the place of the outrage, were incautious enough to come to Perto with the horse, and thus reveal the fact that they were participators in the outrage.

During this conversation there was also present an Armenian from a neighbouring village, I think, with whom my Dragoman conversed in Armenian about the attack. When my Dragoman described to him the two robbers, the Armenian said he knew who the Yuz-bashe was, and was on the point of mentioning the name, when the Kurds standing around prevented him from doing so. It is also worth mentioning that the Kurds were trying evidently to throw off suspicion from themselves on to Armenian revolutionists, but I protested vigorously against this, saying that I could very well distinguish two Kurds from two Armenians, and also the Kurdish language, which they used between themselves, from the Armenian language.

I suffered pretty severe pain from my wounds, but I thought it better to set out for Adiljivas immediately, fearing that I might not be able to make the journey, 25 to 30 kilom., the next day. I therefore asked Mehmet Effendi for a few more men for this journey, and he was quite willing to give them, and pointed to two armed Kurds, who might accompany us, and I accepted with thanks. I then rode ahead slowly with one of my zaptiehs, my Dragoman, and the Own-bashe stopping behind a little, in order to wait for the two new companions; but when they came up to me, after a quarter of an hour, they were alone. I asked them where the two Kurds of Mehmet Effendi were. Answer, "When you had ridden away, two Kurds came up from Kasir on a full gallop, and spoke secretly to Mehmet Effendi and his men, whereupon Mehmet Effendi declared that he could not give us two Kurds, and so we rode away alone."

My Dragoman now asked me again what sort of horses the robbers had, and I answered, a grey horse and a red one. My Dragoman asked if one of the men had marks on his face, and I said, yes; that was the servant who rode the red horse. "Yes," said my Dragoman, "the Kurd on the red horse had these marks." According to the opinion of my Dragoman, the robbers were identical with the two Kurds whose arrival prevented Mehmet Effendi from giving the escort. They had waited behind the hills, until they saw me riding away, and then came on quickly in order to be able to say, later on, that they had been in Perto with the others and not committed the outrage.

We now rode on towards Adeljivaz as rapidly as the beginning darkness allowed. After about an hour, when it began to be cool, my Dragoman asked me to wrap up my head to prevent the wound from catching cold, and I wrapped a white towel about my head, so that my cap was invisible. This, and the circumstance that I had on a Kurdish jacket, with a Hamidieh's jacket over it, saved my life, and probably that of the whole party, an hour later. About that time we had passed the junction of the road from Sepan, on which we were, with the direct road to Adeljivaz. My Dragoman, who was behind me, called to the two zaptiehs, who were ahead: "There are people on the road." It being so dark that remote objects were not visible, the zaptiehs did not see anything, and answered: "There is nothing." But my Dragoman felt sure that he saw men to the right of the road just before us, and when we had advanced a few steps we saw four men standing at the right of the road near some large boulders, while my Dragoman saw on the left fifteen mounted men, who cautiously withdrew a little lower down, so as not to be seen.

The four men on the right asked us: "Who are you?" and our zaptieh answered: "Askir; who are you?" The four men replied: "People from Potnots on their way home." Upon this we slowly passed them, the two zaptiehs ahead; then I, with the Hamidieh coat, and the white towel about my head, and last the Dragoman, who, on account of the chill, had put on the overcoat of one of the zaptiehs, and so they took us all for soldiers, and let us pass.

I mention here that my two pack-horses, the two men of Dr. Raynolds, and one zaptieh passed this place about 3 or 3:30 P.M. Not far from them, but a little higher on the mountain, an Armenian from Adeljivaz was riding, quietly returning on his donkey from Ajesh, and when he came near the band of nineteen persons who were lying in ambuscade for me, they asked him: "Who are you?" and as he said: "An Armenian," they fired upon him, killing him without the slightest reason, not even thinking it worth their while to take the donkey or anything else. When my men saw this they whipped their horses, and made good their escape to Adeljivaz. This proves that the attack on me had been deliberately planned and prepared for a long time, and that the men in the [illegible] houses. Had I passed the place by daylight doubtless we should all of us have been murdered.

Reaching Adeljivaz, I went to the house of the Kaïmakam, who had just returned from a ride. He told me that the Kaïmakam of Ajesh had telegraphed my arrival to him, upon which he had come to meet me with twenty zaptiehs, as the region was so unsafe. The next day I saw in the house of the Kaïmakam the father of the Armenian just murdered. All the people agree that the whole outrage against me had been planned by Hosseïn Pasha, and that the things taken from me had been brought to his house.

At 5 A.M., Sunday, I left Adeljivaz, and returned to Van by sail-boat.

List of Articles taken from me.

Among the many valuable things taken from me I name the following:—

A valuable chronometer, an aneroid barometer, a pair of gold eye-glasses, a revolver, a photographic apparatus, a whip with ivory rings, a purse with more than 60 Turkish gold liras and about 200 roubles in Russian bank-notes, a pair of small gold ear-rings, a match-box, a pair of riding boots, spurs, compass, knife, leather jacket, yapoonji, cartridges for revolver and rifle, saddle-bags, lantern, universal instrument, bridle, two metre-measures, pocket-handkerchiefs, tobacco-box, and, more than all, two note-books containing the results of my observations.

Personal Description of the two Robbers.

1st. The Yuz-bashe, slim, tall, well-proportioned, about 1·78 metres tall, exceedingly handsome, beautiful, dark moustache, a Kurdish shawl wound round his cap, longish face, very well dressed in dark, not grey, suit; about 26 to 28 years old; Martini-Henry rifle, grey horse.

2nd. Servant, slim, well-proportioned, about 1·65 metres tall, very small moustache, I think rather round face, very dirty and ugly face, with stains on one cheek, ordinary Kurdish attire and head-gear, but poor; Martini-Henry rifle, red horse; about 20 years of age.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 7.)

(No. 577.) *Constantinople, November 3, 1898.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Captain Elliot, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, respecting the state of the Armenians in the Arjisch and Adeljivas Cazas and the oppression of the Kurdish Pashas.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 61.

Captain Elliot to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 26.) *Van, October 14, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that during my recent visit to Arjisch and Adeljivas I had opportunities of noticing the miserable state to which those districts have been reduced by the oppression of the three Kurd Pashas, Hosein, Emin, and Haji Semir.

These men's conduct has frequently been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Embassy, and representations were made on the subject, with the result that they were ordered into exile.

They, however, returned from Constantinople early in the summer rewarded.

Hosein Pasha, the worst of the three, was promoted from Kaïmakam to Mir Alai.

On my way to Adeljivas I met refugees from Kyadeshish, a village close to the lake in the eastern part of that caza. They had left their homes owing to the exactions and threats of Hosein Pasha's men.

Everywhere I heard the same story. The Armenians paid the taxes, cultivated the fields, and Hosein Pasha carried off the crops.

One morning his men had even the insolence to commence cutting down the trees in an Armenian village close to my camp. My zaptieh informed me that the Government were afraid of Hosein Pasha, and dared not interfere.

In this particular instance the Kurds went away for a time, but doubtless eventually carried out their orders, which were to cut down 150 trees and take them to a village about 3 miles off, where Hosein Pasha meant to build a sheepfold.

It is not to be supposed that the Kurds perform any manual labour. They merely stand by while the Armenians cut down their own trees, or, if trees are not handy, pull the timbers out of their own houses, and carry them to where they are desired.

Similarly, when their crops are taken possession of, they have to cart them to wherever they are ordered.

Hosein Pasha wants to get more Armenians to work for him on these terms, but the refugees who are being turned out of Russia are naturally not anxious to return to their villages in his district. When he can get hold of them he sends them to the villages, and makes them work by threatening them with death if they refuse.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Armenians there are merely the slaves of the Kurds.

The three Pashas doubtless found their visit to Constantinople very expensive, under the circumstances under which it was made, and the means they are resorting to to indemnify themselves for their outlay make life intolerable for the miserable creatures in their power.

When south of the lake I noticed that the Kurdish exactions bore heavily on the Armenian villagers, as the Kurds there claim the right to levy tribute on their "rayas," as they style the Armenians, who had as well to pay every para of the taxes due to Government.

Bad as the state of affairs there is, it cannot be compared with what exists in the districts now referred to.

For miles I rode over plains at the foot of the Sipan Mountain, which once produced the best corn in the vilayet. The crops are not irrigated, but the rich volcanic soil yields a return of ten- to fifteen-fold, equal to, if not exceeding, that of the best irrigated land near Van. It was from here that most of the food supply of Van used to come.

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Most of this is now uncultivated, and numerous large villages, once surrounded by trees and gardens, are deserted and in ruins, or else occupied by Kurds and a few miserable Armenians.

Hoscin Pasha is seizing all the grain he can lay his hands on, and hoarding it in the hopes of sending the price up, as there is a prospect of scarcity in the spring.

I told the Vali what I had seen, and he said he would seize Hoscin Pasha's stores. He also said that when the Armenian question was settled the Government would proceed to deal with the Kurds, but that they could not manage both at once.

Tahir Pasha has certainly dealt with the Armenians with admirable moderation and good sense, and has won their confidence. In this respect I have little fear for the future if he continues as he has begun.

He will, however, find the Kurd question a much more difficult one, and unless his Government is really in earnest he will come to grief over it as his predecessors have done.

If His Imperial Majesty imagines that the Kurds are loyal to him he is very much mistaken. They talk with contempt of him and his government, and when troubles shall arise in these parts they will take care to be on the winning side.

The loss of revenue the present policy entails is enormous, and will continue to increase. That it is persisted in can only be attributed to timidity.

The villages in the statement inclosed have not been selected. They are merely those I passed through or near, and about which I made inquiries.

The list, imperfect as it is, may serve to illustrate what I have stated above.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 61.

STATEMENT of Effects of Kurdish Oppression and Outrage on Armenian villages north of Lake Van.

Name of Village.	Cause.	Former Condition. Number of Houses.	Former Condition. Number of Sheep.	Present Condition. Number of Houses.	Present Condition. Number of Sheep.	Remarks.
Asruf	Atjisch ..	200	3,000	22	None	These four villages were pillaged, and many of the inhabitants massacred by Emin Pasha. At Kenzo but 11 escaped out of about 300. All the bodies were thrown into a pit and covered over with earth, many being purposely buried alive.
Zagzakh ..	.. ..	60	1,200	10	40	
Jildikh ..	.. ..	80	1,600	Deserted		
Kenzo ..	.. ..	60	1,500	11	None	
Norshan ..	Adeljivas ..	100	2,000	15	80	These villages owe their present condition to Hoscin Pasha. It is true he disregarded the orders he received to massacre the people, but the price of his protection can be seen from Table. Many Kurds objected to killing the Armenians, because they were supported by their Sheiks.
Tchukkoyeni ..	.. ..	100	1,500	Deserted		
Karakelish ..	.. ..	60	800	8	160	
Sipan (Upper) ..	.. ..	60	1,500	10	100	
Sipan (Lower) ..	.. ..	50	1,000	32	50	
Norshinjak ..	.. ..	80	1,000	20	80	
Kyorne ..	.. ..	80	700	10	50	
Ivanetz ..	.. ..	80	850	15	150	
Pergana ..	.. ..	65	1,000	10	150	
Aran	.. ..	120	1,800	70	150	Armenians were killed by Hoscin Pasha, but not in so wholesale a manner as by Emin Pa
Avordake ..	.. ..	140	2,000	60	250	
Yerhara ..	.. ..	45	600	1	50	
Totals ..	.	1,370	22,750	485	1,210	
	Percentage of sheep left..	..	..	..	5·4	
	..	..	..	..	4·36	

There used to be upwards of 100 Armenian villages in the two cazas. Above list only includes a [illegible] along the [illegible]

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT

No. 62.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 244.) *Foreign Office, November 9, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 551 of the 23rd ultimo relative to the claims of foreign subjects in Turkey arising from the massacres of Armenians.

I authorize you to endeavour to arrange for co-operation with the United States' Minister with a view to obtaining the settlement of these claims, and I request you to inform me of any steps which he may propose to take in the matter.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY

No. 63.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 14.*)

(No. 587.) *Constantinople, November 9, 1898.*

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, relative to a feud between local Kurdish Notables in the District of Charsandjak.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 63.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 31.) *Kharput, October 26, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, owing to the disturbed condition of the District of Charsandjak, the result of a feud of long standing between two local notables, Osman Bey and Arslan Bey, which recently broke out into open hostilities, the authorities have had the rival Beys arrested and brought under guard to Kouat.

The district in question has suffered for some time past in consequence of the embittered state of feeling between the Beys, of whom the first-named is the son of the late Ishak Pasha, a local tyrant of some notoriety in the province, and only a few weeks ago the authorities succeeded in bringing about a nominal reconciliation between the rivals, which has proved to be of very short duration.

According to report, the Armenian tenants on both sides have suffered considerable loss in consequence of the raids made by plundering parties in the service of the rival Chiefs, but no Armenian was killed during the fray.

As the Beys are men of great local influence, it is unlikely that the Government will adopt severe measures towards them, but it is hoped that even their temporary detention will have a beneficial effect on the condition of the district referred to.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 590.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 9, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to information which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, a slight disturbance occurred at Bitlis on the 31st ultimo, which, however, was promptly suppressed by the authorities.

It is stated that one person was killed and about six wounded on this occasion.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 65.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 593.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 9, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 532 and 544 of the 11th ultimo and 28th September respectively on the subject of Armenian incursions into the Erzeroum district, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van reports that some Armenian revolutionists were arrested in the middle of October, and divulged the fact that arms had been hidden, which were found and seized.

I have since been informed that the Turkish Government received a warning that 100 Armenians had collected at Ottî, across the Russian frontier, with the intention of attacking Mussulman villages. The Turkish Ambassador at St. Petersburgh was instructed to urge the Russian Government to take steps to prevent the threatened incursion. Another band was also stated to have collected at Kentek, under the leadership of a well-known Armenian revolutionist who had taken refuge in Russia.

The Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs promised, on behalf of the Russian Government, to have inquiries made and orders sent to watch the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 594. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 9, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Jedda, reporting the appointment of Mazhar Bey to act as Acting Governor and Commandant at Medina.

This individual was claimed by the French Embassy (after an inquiry by their Military Attaché) as being the person chiefly responsible for the murder of Padre Salvatore, almost the only foreign victim of the Armenian massacres. He was tried by court-martial in February 1897, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment in a fortress with degradation to the ranks. The French Embassy, however, insisted that the sentence should be changed to imprisonment for life in a fortress in the Hedjaz, to which the Sultan consented in March 1897.

On the news of this strange interpretation which the Turkish Government have given to the above sentence, the French Embassy at once insisted on Mazhar's removal from the post of Acting Governor of Medina, and I learn from my French colleague that he has strong hopes of being able to secure the maintenance of Mazhar's punishment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 110. Confidential.) *Jeddah, October 14, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the Muhafiz of Medina, Lieutenant-General Osman Pasha, has been dismissed from his office, and will go to reside in disgrace at Tayif or Mecca.

Further, the Colonel who was Meikez Commandant at Medina recently died, and the command is now vacant.

It would seem that Colonel Mazhar Bey, who was retired from the army on account of his responsibility in an affair which gave great offence to France, as being the Power that protects Catholic Missions (at Malatia, some three or four years ago, perhaps, but I forget all details), has been residing at Tayif (confined to that neighbourhood) during the last two years, and is now proceeding to Medina to act as Governor and Commandant *ex tem.*

He is now due here *en route* for Medina, and will be accompanied by a strong escort, said to be some 200 infantry.

There would seem to have been very bitter ill-feeling between the Ferik Osman Pasha and Ahmed Hatih Pasha, Vali of Hedjaz. The Civil Administration of Medina as a sandjak should, of course, be subordinated to that of the vilayet, but the Ferik apparently, being authorized to communicate with the Porte directly, refused to receive any instructions [illegible] the Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 14.)

(No. 595.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 10, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Mr. Vice-Consul Monahan, giving an account of a journey undertaken by him in the Sandjak of Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 67.

Vice-Consul Monahan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.) *Bitlis, October 13, 1898.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, herewith inclosed, a Report on my recent journey through the Sandjak of Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. H. MONAHAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 67.

Notes on a Journey through Mush Sandjak, August 25 to September 6, 1898.

Mush Town and Plain.—I learnt at Mush from Christian informants that the Christian gendarmes, of whom there are about seventy in the Sandjak, are now getting their full pay while the Mussulmans are not. The employment of Christian gendarmes seems to be a success in Mush, perhaps the only district of which this can be said. The harvest on Mush Plain was excellent this year. Some reform in tax-collecting seems to have been carried out in the Sandjak. Only three or four gendarmes go

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round with each "Fahsildar" (unarmed tax-collector), and I heard little of beating or of the familiar abuses. The chief matter of complaint of the Christian villagers of Mush Plain seems to be their universal indebtedness to extortionate Mussulmans.

According to the probably exaggerated statement of the Armenian Bishop of Mush, every Christian village of the plain has a large part, if not all, of its land in "Miribalik," that is, paying half the yearly produce to the money-lender. "Selef" also is common, namely, the system by which a villager borrows 10 piastres in spring and in autumn gives the lender a sheep worth 40 piastres.

The people seem well fed. Murdering seems to have recommenced in September in which months (*N. S.*) seven murders of Christian villagers by Kurds, four of them being of "Reises" (Headmen) of villages, are reported to have been committed in the plain. I have not been able thoroughly to verify the reports. The alleged murderers are all well known, at least their names have been given to me. They are all settled Kurds of Mush villages, not men of much note, and seem to have committed the murders on account of resisted attempts to rob the villages of grain. Three Kurds are also reported to have been murdered in the same month by Kurds on the plain. In July, in Sikhavi, a Christian village, one man was killed and eight oxen taken by the Demeh nomads.

Varto Caza.—Gumguma, the chief town, consists of 240 houses, of which 40 are Christian. In the caza there are only four Christian villages, but these are large ones. The Christians of the caza were well protected by Mehmet Bey, Hamidieh Kaimakam, since killed in the great Kurdish fight at the end of September. They seem to have comparatively little to complain of.

Boulanik Caza.—I visited Kotauli, a Kurdish village of about fifty houses. It belongs to six brothers, Jibrauli Chiefs, four of whom have been in prison in Bitlis for about six years for murdering Kurds in robbing caravans. The remaining two are fairly well behaved, and rule the village. That is to say all the villagers are in a vague sort of way their servants, and are employed by them in robbery. The Kotauli Kurds are, I am told, not Hamidieh, though they and their neighbours have petitioned to join that force.

From Perkeshan (a six Armenian village), 152 oxen were taken in July by Beshar's Hassanauli Hamidiehs, but 112 have been recovered under the auspices of Ibrahim Pasha at Mahasguird. The soldiers posted in many of the exposed villages of Boulanik, from five to ten in each, are doing good service. From Odenchur, another Armenian village, forty-nine buffaloes were taken in the same month by the same Beshar's men. None have been recovered. This summer Beshar sent his family and retainers to stay in the village Yunjalu (see my despatch No. 14 of the 15th August). Ibrahim Pasha sent ten soldiers to drive them out. The servants of Beshar resisted, and the soldiers killed one man and one horse and drove all the servants out (about 27th August). Beshar, however, still keeps half the land of the village (see my despatch above referred to). Another Armenian village Miribar (twenty houses) fell two years ago, into the hands of the Hamidieh Major Daré, who seized half its land. There are no other such instances in Boulanik which is, on the whole, a comparatively prosperous caza, two-thirds of its population of 27,000 being Christians.

Mahasguird.—The few Christian villages of this caza are all under Kurdish protection, and do not seem to have ever suffered much. The General of Division Ibrahim Pasha, has been in the caza since the 25th July keeping the Hamidiehs in order, and especially trying to get back the sheep and cattle lifted this summer from Akhlat. He has succeeded in recovering 300 animals, mostly sheep. Most of the oxen seem to be hopelessly lost to their owners. His attention recently must have been chiefly taken up by the escort of Armenian revolutionists.

Mahasguird is fertile and fairly prosperous.

On the whole Varto and Mahasguird seem to have little importance in regard to the Armenian question, except as the homes of Hamidieh robbers, who issue forth into Mush Plain and Akhlat. In Boulanik Kurkish depredations, though comparatively speaking not very serious, have been going on for the last ten years unchecked by Government, and the results have been impoverishment of a once very rich caza emigration, and extensive throwing of land out of cultivation. In the neighbouring caza, Akhlat, the Christian peasants have now probably hardly oxen enough to raise from their land the food which they absolutely need for themselves. It seems that in these four cazas, and especially in Akhlat, a partial failure of crops will cause a great attempted exodus to Russia, and a general confusion, of which the results may be most serious.

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 14.*)

(No. 598.) *Constantinople, November 10, 1898.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 593 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have received a telegram from Captain Maunsell, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting a disturbance at Bitlis.

"Fifty revolutionists, with a band of outlaws, engaged the troops on the outskirts of the town; five Armenians and two soldiers were killed. The Mussulmans in the town then commenced an attack on the Armenians, several of whom were wounded, and some shops were plundered. The Vali promptly interfered, and succeeded in putting down the disturbance. The revolutionists, who are said to have come from Russia, were dispersed to the mountains."

In my opinion, the apathy of the Russian Government in regard to these repeated insurrectionary incursions across the frontier, is intended to show the Ottoman Government the danger of allowing any coolness in the friendly relations between the two countries, and how much they depend on the friendly action of their powerful neighbours for the promotion of tranquillity on the frontier.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 69.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 21.*)

(No. 600.) *Constantinople, November 15, 1898.*

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 551 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to report that, after consultation with the Minister of the United States, I have addressed a note to the Sublime Porte insisting on a settlement of the Armenian massacre claims, copy of which I have the honour to inclose herewith.

Mr. Strauss told me that, while urging the Sublime Porte to submit the question of these claims to arbitration, he pointed out that his own Government on several occasions (notably the Chinese claims in consequence of the outrages in California, and the Italian claims for the lynchings at New Orleans) arrived at a settlement with foreign Governments on the basis of personal compensation for losses and injuries, reserving the legal liability of the Central Government.

The Sublime Porte admitted that arbitration would be given against them, and seemed very unwilling to have recourse to this expedient. Mr. Strauss thereupon urged the payment of a lump sum, and told the Minister that he knew I was determined to insist upon a settlement, and he repeated his previous statement that his Government would very shortly take energetic measures if he failed to settle the matter diplomatically.

A report in favour of a settlement of all these claims was presented to the Council of Ministers on the 14th instant, and the ultimate decision will then rest in the hands of the Sultan.

I have informed my French and Italian colleagues of the note I have addressed to the Porte, and urged that they should write to the Sublime Porte in a similar sense. To this they have agreed, and I am not without hope that these long-pending claims may be at last settled.

The Russian Embassy declined on a previous occasion, as your Lordship is aware, to take part in joint representations in regard to this question. Mr. Strauss now tells me that he believes the Russian claims were settled a long time ago, the amount being included in other claims against the Ottoman Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Note Verbale.

HER Majesty's Embassy has the honour to acknowledge the Sublime Porte's *note verbale* of the 18th July last respecting the claims of certain British subjects on account of losses suffered during the disturbances of 1895–96, and also their note of the 9th November last.

Her Majesty's Embassy must, however, maintain the arguments already set forth in preceding communications on the subject, and wish to state, in the most clear and positive manner, that Her Majesty's Government cannot alter their view that the Ottoman Government are bound to indemnify British subjects and protected persons for all the losses sustained by them.

Her Majesty's Embassy has no desire to put forward exaggerated claims, and the Sublime Porte may rest assured that the fullest examination and scrutiny has been exercised in all cases where reparation is demanded.

But it is in the interest of the Turkish Government that the settlement of these claims should no longer be delayed, and Her Majesty's Embassy therefore trusts that the Porte will at an early date agree to compensate British subjects for the losses which they have sustained.

British Embassy, November 12, 1898.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 21.)

(No. 601. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 14, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 594 of the 9th instant, I learn from a confidential source that an Imperial Iradé has been issued, ordering that Mazhar Bey, the murderer of the Padre Salvatore, should be imprisoned once more in the fortress of Taif, in the Yemen.

This order has been transmitted telegraphically to the proper quarter by the Minister of War, and the Turkish Ambassador in Paris has been instructed to inform the French Government of what has been done in consequence of the protest lodged by their Embassy here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 71.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 21.)

(No. 603.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 16, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 591 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Hodeida, through Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, containing a further Report respecting the present disturbed state of affairs in the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Vice-Consul Ahmed to Consul Devey.

(No. 63.)
Sir, *Hodeida, October* 12, 1898.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 55 of the 7th September, 1898, I have the honour to report that, per Turkish transport-steamer "Hassan Pasha," on the 29th of the last month, new Governor of Hodeida, named Ali Nasret Pasha, who held similar position at Tripoli, Berbera, came here. The above-mentioned steamer, after one day, started for Comfida (Assyr), whence she was to carry 750 Arab exiles to some part of Turkey.

About ten days ago news reached me that thirty-six Tabours were waiting at Kofal, where over 40,000 Arabs have assembled to make war against the Turks. Yesterday I heard that for last three days severe fighting was going on with a heavy loss on the side of the Turks.

Transport "Assyr" brought to Hodeida 2 Lewas, 775 Radifs, and 180 mules on the 8th of this month.

On the 9th October last, transport-ship "Babyl" took away from Hodeida 150 Arab exiles from the Yemen for Trablers.

On the same day Turkish man-of-war "Iskender," about which I wrote before, came to this port.

I have, &c.
(Signed) T. U. AHMED.

No. 72.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 28.)

(No. 616.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 23, 1898.

IN recent despatches to your Lordship, ending with my despatch No. 598 of the 10th instant, I have had the honour to report to your Lordship on the subject of Armenian incursions into the Erzeroum district, to which the attention of the Russian Government has been drawn on several occasions by the Turkish Embassy at St. Petersburgh.

I have now the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of correspondence relating to the recent incident at Bitlis, already briefly reported to your Lordship.

It appears from these despatches, which include a report from the Dragoman left in charge of British interests at Bitlis, and himself an Armenian, that on the 31st ultimo a band of seventeen revolutionists appeared in the neighbourhood of Bitlis, and, after an encounter with the Turkish troops, escaped with the loss of two men, inflicting a loss of two killed and three wounded on their opponents.

On the news of this inroad the Moslem population of Bitlis broke loose, and attacked the Armenian quarter, but the authorities acted promptly and energetically, and the outbreak only lasted ten minutes. One Turk and one Armenian appear to have been killed, and about twenty Armenians were wounded.

Captain Maunsell reports that he understands that this band came direct from Russia, and that the band which was dispersed at Melasgird were dressed in Russian clothes, and carried Russian arms.

It is satisfactory to note that the local authorities acted so promptly. I have been informed by the Acting British Vice-Consul at Sivas that the Vali of that vilayet assured him confidentially that he had received stringent orders from the Palace at once to suppress any outbreak before it had time to spread.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 72.

Mr. Mirzoyan to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)

Bitlis, November 8, 1893.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that on the 31st October a band of revolutionists, numbering about seventeen men, and having the famous Serop as their leader, appeared near Papshen, a village one hour's distance from Bitlis. Upon this a rumour spread among the Turks that these revolutionists intended to attack the city. The Government at once sent troops, and a skirmish followed. This excited the Turks, and caused a great panic among the Christians. Shortly after a slight disturbance occurred in the town, but thanks to the prompt action of the authorities, and especially to the personal efforts and courage of Ali Pasha, the commander of the troops, order was restored in about ten minutes. One Armenian was killed, one Turk and about twenty Armenians were wounded, and several silversmiths' shops were plundered.

About twenty-five Turks have been arrested who have been accused by the wounded people of being the authors of the committed crimes.

His Excellency the Vali promised to recover the goods pillaged from the shops.

As regards the troops, they continued fighting, and succeeded in hemming the revolutionists in a valley near Papshen until night, when the band broke its way through and escaped, causing, as far as I know, two deaths and three wounded to the soldiers. Two Armenians were killed: one an old man from Papshen, the other is supposed to be one of the band. The village of Papshen was partly plundered.

On the 6th November, one of the principal men of Bore, an Armenian village, two hours' distance from here, informed the Government that there were some revolutionists in the village. Troops and gendarmes went there, and surrounded four houses, and burnt them with the four persons therein. These people are natives of the village, but one of them has lately come from Russia. They do not belong to the former band.

The excitement of the Turks continues, but the Government is doing its best to protect the Christians.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HAGOP MIRZOYAN, *Dragoman.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 72.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 30.)

Van, November 9, 1893.

Sir,

AS I understand that Her Majesty's Vice-Consulate at Bitlis is vacant for the time being, I have the honour to forward to your Excellency the following report of disturbances which have recently occurred at that town:—

A week ago, a party of fifty Armenian revolutionists, accompanied, it is said, by a few of the local Armenian outlaws, probably some of the band under Serop, were discovered to be approaching the town.

A skirmish took place outside the town between these and some soldiers and zaptiehs, who were sent out to oppose them.

In this two soldiers and five Armenians are said to have been killed, and the latter were dispersed to the mountains.

The Moslems of Bitlis town, on hearing of this, commenced an attack on the Armenians in the town; some of the latter were wounded by knives, and a few shops pillaged. The Vali seems to have promptly interfered in this disturbance, and by sending down soldiers soon put an end to it. This party of revolutionists are not local, but it appears came direct from Russia.

From further news which I have gathered regarding the recent disturbance near Melasgird, I understand that the revolutionists there were dressed in Russian dress, and carried Russian arms.

I have had the honour of informing your Excellency of the substance of the above by telegraph.

I have, &c.

(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

Inclosure 3 in No. 72.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 25.)

Erzeroum, November 11, 1893.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to state that Mr. Mirzoyan, our Dragoman at Bitlis, has confirmed by letter his telegraphic news of a slight disturbance near that place on the 31st ultimo, reported to your Excellency by Mr. Graves, telegraphically, on the 1st instant.

I have waited before writing, in case any further information might come to hand, but none has been received. The Dragoman reports that the disturbance was caused by the appearance of a revolutionary Armenian band, the number of which he omits to state, under a well-known leader named Serop, about one hour from Bitlis. Soldiers were sent to meet them, and they were driven off with the loss of one man killed and a few wounded.

There is a rumour of five Armenians having been killed and fifteen wounded in Bitlis three or four days ago. I am making inquiries, and shall inform your Excellency as soon as information reaches me.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Acting Consul.

No. 73.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 258.)

Foreign Office, November 28, 1893.

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 600 of the 15th instant relative to the claims of British subjects on account of losses suffered during the Armenian massacres.

I approve the terms of the *note verbale* which you addressed to the Porte on the 12th instant.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 74.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 3.)

Camp at Bagh Delyusha, Urmi, October 18, 1893.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject of the doings of the latest Russian Ecclesiastical Mission to the Nestorians.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 74.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 3.)

Camp at Bagh Delyusha, Urmi, October 18, 1893.

Sir,

FROM the moment I entered upon the latter part of the road to this very pretty district, news of the doings of the new Russian Mission to the Nestorians were abundant. At a ruined Musulman village where I had erected my tents (the

Mussulman villages are mostly built upon the poorest ground and near the Lake of Urumiah), the aid of a carpenter being required, a Nestorian youth, who was working at this trade, appeared, and, before undertaking the required repairs, proceeded to state that he had followed the example of his Bishop, Mar Yonan, and had signed his name on the registers of the Russian Popes. The fact of his being the only Christian at the time among a Mussulman community, whose village was situated out of the usual track or postal route, as well as his attitude, plainly showed that he considered himself, as a newly-fledged Russian, absolutely free from molestation or harm.

At the Nestorian village of Gavilan, the residence of a Presbyterian teacher, two Roman Catholic priests and their schools, the Elders, to whom I had granted an interview, poured their dreary tale of oppression from robber Kurds, general injustice on the part of their own authorities, as well as their daily trials with their Mussulman neighbours, into my ears.

They had so far resisted the allurements of the Russian missionaries, but were evidently only awaiting, like many others of their kind, the further development of affairs before giving in their adherence to them.

Since my arrival here, the Russian Mission proceeded to a village called Digalah, and have enrolled quite 700 people there.

In two districts of Mar Mariam, the supposed burial-place of the Maji, and presumed stronghold of Nestorians, some 190 people joined the Greco-Russian creed.

Mar Yonan's diocese has given 12,000, and Gulpachan 150 converts.*

On the retirement of the first Russian Mission, many of their adherents, fearing their non-reappearance, hastened to return to their ancient rites.

The majority of these people have yet abstained from rejoining the new Mission, but are watching events, *i.e.*, standing by to see whether material protection is actually to be obtained under the shadow of the new Mission.

An incident which occurred here, just as I was leaving Tabreez, might have hastened a determination or decision on their part.

It seems that a Nestorian priest, Q'asha Dawid, of Digalah, when on the road between this village and Urmi, had been set upon by the servants of a Khan or Noble of Urumiah, who had pitched his tents on the roadside, and had been severely beaten.

Q'asha Dawid is an adherent to the Orthodox faith, but as he is at present on the secret list, on his escape from the clutches of his tormentors he fled for refuge to the residence of his Grace of Canterbury's missionaries.

These gentlemen used, as is customary, their friendly offices and influence in order to obtain some satisfaction for the uncalled for attack upon an unoffending priest, whilst the Russians, on their side, loudly clamoured for a flogging to be inflicted upon the master of the assaulters, over and above any other compensation.

Hearing of the case, the Medjid-es-Sultaneh, one of the most energetic and well-inclined personages in Urmi,† came forward with proposals of satisfaction and compensation, which met with the approval of the English missionaries. An apology was to be offered by the Khan for his servants' ill-deeds. These were to be bastinadoed (although they had, seemingly, but obeyed orders), and a "Khalat" was to be bestowed upon the Q'asha.

The Russian missionaries, however, held out for the personal punishment of the Khan, the loudest clamourer for this being the new, exceedingly courageous, Orthodox Bishop, Mar Yonan.‡ A special courier was dispatched to Tabreez, with an extended Report of the occurrences, by the Russians, in which the Russian Consul-General's aid was urgently requested, in order to obtain the carrying out of their particular desires against the Khan.

Matters were, therefore, for a short time in abeyance, but, whether on account of the dangerous request, or owing to the prospect of my imminent departure for Urumiah, my Russian colleague did not give the support required by his protégés, and the satisfaction proffered, as already stated, through the friendly offices of the Medjid-es-Sultaneh, was accepted by the Q'asha and our missionaries.

The Q'asha has forgotten his sore treatment, and now parades the bazaars clad in the robe of honour given to him. In this case our missionaries have scored by their

* [illegible] to the Orthodox faith amount[illegible] to 14, 49.

† See my despatch of October 17, 1898.

‡ Mar Yonan was the first Nestorian Bishop to embrace the Orthodox faith.

moderation, whilst the Russians have lost much prestige in the eyes of the natives, as well as their adherents, owing to the failure of their far-pushed demands.

Had my Russian colleague supported their claim as to the flagellation of the Khan, a serious attack* upon Christians might have thrown a gloom upon my appearance on the scene in this pleasantly-situated and well-favoured portion of Azerbaijaan, as the Khans, from a strong community of Nobles in these parts, have great influence, owing to their possessions in land, and hold together in all questions concerning their clan.

The general opinion is that slowly, but surely, the Russian Mission will absorb the whole of the Nestorian elements.† These people, as I have already stated in my previous despatches, cannot be blamed for taking the only steps at their disposal to obtain relief from persistent and ever-increasing pressure and even persecution from their land-owners and the Persian authorities.

All these now perceive the fatal effects of their treatment of their most industrious and easily-contented Christian population, and willingly admit their grave deficiencies towards them, as well as the fact that it is now too late to endeavour, with any chance of success, to win them back to their allegiance, for it would be useless to think of attempting to regain their trust or respect, as they are convinced, for once and all, of the futility of all promises on the part of either their authorities or the Persian Government.

The Russian Mission to the Nestorians is a wedge firmly placed, and only awaiting the succeeding strokes of the mallet; and their attitude, from what is publicly seen and reported, is not calculated to leave it in its present position. Complications may be expected to arise at any moment, either from the attitude, demands, or intervention of the Mission itself, or from the new-born pride of their adherents.

Unfortunately, in general, the Mussulman populations are in as desperate a position as their Christian compatriots, and are almost ready to accept with composure, and even with thankfulness, any change which would give any guarantee of right and justice.

It is the opposition or animus of the religious element which is to be feared.

I cannot say whether the position or work of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission will lose or not by the conversion of the Nestorians to the Orthodox faith, or whether there is any possibility or probability of the two Missions combining in their work in the future, for I am ignorant of the differences, relations, or sympathies which may exist or be permissible between the Anglican, old Syrian, and Orthodox beliefs, yet I cannot but praise the prudent and judicious position taken up by our missionaries since the coming of their rivals, however hard, and may-hap painful, it must be to them to have to stand by and behold the people whom they have rescued from ignorance and aided with great personal sacrifices, turning their backs upon them and upon their own ancient traditions at the mere prospect of a problematic protection.

Since the day I entered Urmi I have, owing to the general circumstances of the situation, and perhaps owing to local influences, been also preaching, *i.e.*, urging on every point to the authorities, as well as to all the Notables I have met, the absolute necessity of prudent and reserved action towards the Russian Mission and its adherents, in order to avoid collisions and complications which may have far-reaching consequences, especially at this moment, when, as every one must admit, things in general in Persia are not in a flourishing state, and the Persian Government not in a position to impose its will on its authorities or subjects, or reviudicate its right against its most powerful and watchful neighbour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

* A local riot, in which some three lives (or more) are said to have been lost, occurred on the day previous to my entrance into Urmi.

† The tendency of the Vali, Akdi, or Ruler of a village or Borough, is, being governed and oppressed by the Nestorians' servants, will, I think, go over to the Russian without a moment's hesitation.

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No. 75.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 15.) *Camp at Bagh Delgusha, Urmi,*
My Lord, *October 29, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, submitting some remarks upon things in general in the district of Urumiah and Salmas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 75.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 25.) *Camp at Bagh Delgusha, Urmi,*
Sir, *October 29, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Excellency's information, a few remarks upon things in general in the districts of Urumiah and Salmas which may prove of some interest:—

In the first place, as in duty bound, I shall speak of the land and its aspect, then of the authorities, the various taxes, and customs paid and prevailing, of the population, and the different Missions there, and their objects.

The plains of Urumiah and Salmas form the wealthiest portions of the Province of Azerbaijaan. The soil is rich, and the Christian population most industrious.

Half-way from Tabreez, where only the villages along the hill-sides and streams can compete in vegetation with the many villages in these parts, the very nature of the earth changes.

Great patches of rich black soil are visible, stones and rocks disappear from the surface, and leave the fields and tracks free from their troublesome presence; villages are surrounded by trees and well cultivated fields, and swollen streams are tumbling everywhere, whilst here and there, on the sunny side of the mountains and passes, patches of tobacco-plant cultivation are to be seen.

The main road leading to Urumiah for at least 6 miles goes through plantations, the track is bare of stones, shady trees line it, and the sound of running waters crossing it under large flat slabs of stone, or strongly-built bridges, pleasantly strikes the ear.

The whole appearance of this part of the country possesses an aspect of repair and keep, the lack of which meets one so forcibly in Tabreez and its surroundings. Unfortunately, the native Administration does not seem to be much influenced by the exuberant realities or probabilities around it.

The Governor of the district of Urumiah is Prince Akber Mirza, a son of Ahmed Mirza, a grandson of the old Naib-es-Saltaneh, and therefore very closely related to the late and present Shahs.

For some years past this personage followed the independent career of a leader of banditti in Kermanshah, cutting the roads and attacking the caravans. Attention having been at last called to this unusual occupation of a Prince of the Royal Blood, some steps were taken by the late Shah, through the Emir Nizam, the present Governor of Azerbaijaan, in the endeavour to lead his relative into better paths and ways.

The Emir Nizam succeeded in carrying out his late Majesty's wishes, and, on being named Governor-General of Azerbaijaan, he brought Prince Akbar Mirza with him to Tabreez, and eventually placed him as Governor of this district. Although, seemingly, a bold and energetic captain of brigands, his Highness has not distinguished himself in his more peaceful position and attribution.

The people are dissatisfied with him and his apathy, and have on more than one occasion, it is said, stoned him. The Mollahs and Seyyids heard him in his official residence, and have more that once obliged him to return presents of considerable sums of money which he had only just received from some petitioner, and plainly tell him that they will have none of him.

He, however, is still Governor, and is likely, owing to Imperial patronage and his relationship to the Shah, to remain, notwithstanding the efforts of the religious element—a strong one in these parts—and the fact of our endeavours to dislodge him, his dismissal having actually been obtained by Her Majesty's Legation from the central authorities during my absence on leave last winter.

Parishes and Dues.—As in Tabreez there are two Christian parishes in Urmi, situated on the western side of the town—the one commonly known as Fath Ali Gul, but officially as Mahallé-i-Hindu, and the other, Mat Mariam.*

These parishes were assessed in past days at some 45 tomans per annum, but as they were handed over some years ago to provide a pension to a certain General, Ali Khan and his descendants, they are now yearly mulcted in the sum of 150 tomans. This contribution or tax is assessed at 12½ krans per house and male person.

Taxes paid to Government by Christian Population.—These are in the district of Urumiah and Salmas 15 krans per house and adult male, but should two males inhabit the same house, one pays 5 krans extra; both are, however, obliged to contribute two days' labour free to Government.

The parish of Mat Mariam, so called after its church and shrine, is somewhat heavily assessed. For over 100 years it has been inclosed within the town walls, but it is still considered and treated, owing to its being a place of veneration, to the Christians, and therefore wealthy, as a village; and its inhabitants, some 350 in number, pay a proportionate share of Government tax, which amounts to 114 tomans per annum.

No Christians residing in villages or being cultivators of land pay any taxes to Government, and have only to satisfy certain taxes or dues based on custom or arrangement chimed by their landlords, and which are as follows: -

Milk and Aigan dues on Buildings and Land belonging to Landlords.—These dues are assessed on gardens, vineyards, or buildings, at 10 shahies the 16 square yards, but when the soil does not belong to the cultivator, 15 shahies more are paid on these measurements.

If a man owns a line of trees growing on another's boundary, he pays, on the score of damage caused by the roots and the shadow of the trees to his neighbour's land, a fine for every yard of length of the line, and for every 4 yards in breadth, for presumed shadow, and this amount is also based upon 15 shahies per 16 square yards.

Dues on Cattle.—Cows and asses pay 32 shahies per head per annum; buffalo cows and mares, 3 krans and 4 shahies per head; sheep, 1½ shahies; oxen, horses, and jackasses are free. Eight or ten eggs have to be contributed annually towards the maintenance of the landlord by every hen in a village, whilst in autumn a couple of the tax-paying fowl are handed over in the flesh for the same purpose. Two loads of fuel are annually due also by cultivators or villagers.

Wedding Customs Dues.—On taking a bride from a neighbouring village, the happy man is bound to present her feudal lord with from two to five sugar loaves.

Cultivation Dues called "Sicut."—The cultivator generally provides the cattle and implements for ploughing, the land-owner the seed, and the farmer gets a third of the profits. In particular cases the land is cultivated on half shares of toil, seed, and produce.

Jeddid-ul-Islam, or new Mahomedanism.—When a woman professes Islam, her descendants, notwithstanding ancient and modern Edicts, invariably came forward with all kinds of claims against their Christian kith and kin with regard to properties of every description, and invariably obtain some satisfaction.

All Mollahs and religious teachers declare that on the decease of any person, any child of his who embraces the Mahommedan faith has alone the right to inherit the property left by their father to the detriment and loss of all their Christian brothers and sisters.

"Droits du Seigneur."—The tenure of land being feudal, the "droits du Seigneur," as between Mussulman land-owners and Christian tenants, was retained and claimed until some seventy years ago.

In regard to the sale of properties the same troubles are encountered, and the same prepostrous claims are put forward by the descendants or relatives of the seller, or by any one who can engage the aid of a mercenary Mollah (and there are many such to be found), as occur in Tabreez, and, one may say, in Persia.

Passports for Russia.—The Nestorian labourers who yearly proceed to Russia to

* Supposed to be the burial-place of the Maji.

aid in the gathering of the harvest, pay some 25 krans in Russian and Persian fees, besides satisfying, on their return to Persia, the extra private demands made by Persian officials.

Nothing better can be expected, however, in a land where, besides the general corruption, the agent of the Farmer-General of Customs can divert* the public traffic to places where he has previously set up private tolls.

Salaries and Emoluments of the Nestorian Clergy.—Bishops have a right to a contribution of 1 kran per annum from every Nestorian house, and 10 shahies from every adult male. These dues are collected and forwarded every third year to Mar Shimoon, the Patriarch at Kochanes, in Turkish territory. The lower clergy live on the fees received on baptismal functions, marriages, first fruits in the harvesting season, and two days free labour from their parishioners.

Nestorian Population.—The total number of the Nestorian population in Urmi, Salmas, Solduz, Margawar, and Targawar, is said to amount to 45,000.

Armenian Nationality.—There are but few Armenians established in Urumiah; their strongholds are situated in the plains and villages of Salmas.

The villages of Naktchevan-Tapa, Isalou, and Haftivan are, however, solely inhabited by Armenians.

There are some 100 houses, or 500 souls in Iriava, and between the villages of Karagenz, and others of mixed nationalities or creeds, their numbers may amount to over 6,000

In all, there may be some 20,000 Armenians in these districts. In Dilman, the capital of Salmas Plain, there are only Musulmans to be found.

Jews.—The Jews in Northern Persia are only to be found in the plains of Salmas and Urumiah and on the Perso-Turkish border. In Urumiah there are some 300 Jewish houses, or 1,500 souls. At Kohneshar, 100 houses or 500 souls, Solduz, 150 houses or 750 persons

Following the general traditions of their brethren in the rest of the world, they do not till the soil nor possess land, but engage in petty trade, hawking goods from village to village.

They pay the same taxes as the villagers, but are naturally exempted from dues in connection with agriculture.

The Mohammedans pay some of the same taxes and dues in villages as the Christians, but as they are liable to military service, from which the Christians are exempted, they do not give as much in each case as the former.

Commercial and other Notes.

A custom-house, properly speaking, does not exist in Urmi, but it is replaced by three "rahdaric" stations (octroi posts) placed at a few miles' distance from the town. One of these stands on the point where the roads from Tabreez to Salmas and Urmi diverge, the second is on the Kurdistan and Soujboulak road, and the third between Urmi and the border.

There is likewise no fixed tariff on the various articles imported, but loads alone pay a duty which is put down at 3 krans 15 shahies a camel-load, of which probably one-third goes to the representatives of the Tabreez Customs, 1 kran and 10 shahies a horse and mule charge, and 15 shahies per donkey-load.

Tobacco from Turkish Borders.—I am informed that upon the importation of tobacco from the border owing to their being no tariff, and loads alone paying, the importers make a profit of about 2 per cent., to the detriment of the Tabreez custom-house, where this article, on its introduction by middlemen, pays 5 per cent. duty.

Local Cultivation of Pipe Tobacco.—Tütün, or pipe-tobacco cultivation in Urumiah and Salmas has, seemingly, sprung into a vigorous existence, and from all reports an industry has now begun which is likely to supersede grain-growing, as the profits from the cultivation of the latter, although prime necessaries, are about half those accruing from the former.

Fuel, Charcoal, and Fruit.—These articles are only subject to octroi dues amounting to 6 or 7 shahies per load.

Dried Fruit, i.e., Raisins.—Dried fruit is mostly imported into Russia, as the expenses of transport and British customs duties leave a very small margin. It is said that 200,000 "koncharie" (local measure), or 12 Tabreez batmans of 1,000 "miskals,"

* This statement is made on the most trustworthy authority

about 120 lbs. English each, of dried fruit are annually exported to Russia, but this year the quantity has decreased owing to a bad season.

In previous years the "koncharie" was worth, on an average, 25 krans, in recent years its value rose to 28 and even 34 krans, and this year it has reached 55 to 58 krans, but at the present moment, owing to the scarcity of cash, it has temporarily fallen to 44 krans. It may again rise, for ready cash is being brought from Tabreez on post-horses, the journey occupying ten days.

Raisins are the principal article of exportation from Urmi to foreign ports, whilst but small quantities of rice, syrup (grape juice), native peas and tobacco are sent to Tabreez and the surrounding districts.

Value of Octroi Dues in Urumiah.—The customs, or rather octroi dues of Urumiah are farmed at 14,500 tomans, but from all reports the farmer will lose some 2,000 tomans on his speculation this year, owing to the lessened exportation of raisins and dried fruit following a bad season.

Demand for British Manufactures.

British Calicoes, Velvet, and Cutlery, &c.—From what I am able to gather there is a serious demand for British calicoes, cloth, velvet, hardware, and Sheffield cutlery, for these articles are found by the natives to be much superior to the kinds imported from Russia and Germany. There would, therefore, seem to be a good opening for an enterprising firm, which would open a general store for the sale of these manufactures, as well as of first-class drugs.

The only difficulty to be at first encountered would be the learning of Turki, but this could be easily remedied by the employment of trustworthy native Christians who have been educated at the various Missions, and have an exceedingly fair knowledge of English. Small profits, constant supply, and, therefore, quick turn-over, would have to be the rule of any firm undertaking the above business.

Prints.—Three-quarters of the prints sold in the district are furnished by Manchester, coming there partly by Mossul in Turkey, and partly by Trebizond viâ Khoi, but owing to the present intermittent manner in which these goods are imported, Russian prints, although of a much inferior quality, and much less appreciated, are superseding them. It is true that the duration and cost of transport are important considerations, but a regular importation and a quick sale would tend to lessen these difficulties.

Turkey Red Prints.—The production and exportation in late years of this manufacture in Russia is encouraged by a bounty of 15 per cent. It has, therefore, ousted the English importation of this article.

Glassware, Petroleum, and Sugar.—All these articles are solely imported from Russia.

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrians.

The aim of this Mission is to help and build up an existing church, to instruct and encourage its followers, and it acts with the knowledge and acceptance of the Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, the occupant of the Apostolic See, from which the Church of the East revolted at the time of Nestorians.

It has come to the rescue of a hard-pressed community, by training up a body of literate native clergy, by means of seminaries and schools, and so infuse a worthy spiritual life into a Church reduced to very low depths of ignorance during many centuries of oppression.

The French Roman Catholic Mission.

The Latin Mission of the French Lazarists has been in existence for some fifty years. It is directed by a Bishop, several Priests, of French and Chaldean nationalities. It has two branches, one at Urmi, and the other at Khosrova. This last branch, to which is attached an ecclesiastical seminary, is under the supervision of a native Bishop, who is under the obedience of the Patriarch of Babylon, residing at Mossul.

The strongest centre of the Roman Catholics in Persia is the plain of Salmas. A small company of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul is also attached to the French Mission in Urmi.

American Mission in Urumiah.

The Presbyterian Mission from America has been carrying on its labours some sixty years in these parts.

Its head-quarters are at Urmi, where the staff is composed of five or six ministers, a physician, and some lady missionaries.

The American colony is a numerous one, as most of its members are married.

The Mission has resulted in the establishment of a native Presbyterian community with chapels and schools, scattered over the plain of Urumiah.

The various American families belonging to the Mission inhabit a spacious park, not far from the town gates, where, with the funds at their disposal, they have, as in Tabreez, erected comfortable dwelling-houses, hospitals, and a seminary, besides various schools or settlements in the neighbouring villages. They possess well-built dwelling-places in the village of Seir, situated in the mountains behind the town of Urumiah.

The various members of these different Missions, I am glad to say, are on friendly terms of intercourse with each other, and I trust that my visit to these parts, and my impartial and frankly amicable attitude towards them all, including the newly-established Russian Mission, may tend to strengthen the ties of amity and good-will between them, for, although the objects of the Roman Catholic and the Presbyterian Missions are quite distinct from those on which the English missionaries carry on, they have all done, and are doing, good work in educating and training the East Syrian nation, in establishing hospitals and other useful institutions and aids.

Last, but not least, they have gained the esteem of the well-thinking natives, and the friendship of the Notables and wealthy native proprietors, and the respect of the native authorities.

Orphanages in Urumiah.

There are two orphanages in Urumiah: one situated at Göktepa, a village belonging to the Serajes-Sultaneh, one of the principal landlords in Urumiah, and the other in a fine piece of inclosed land just beyond the gates of the town.

The opening of Göktepa orphanage is due to the initiative of "Shamasha" or Deacon Khamishoo Auraham, a philanthropic Syrian gentleman, and his wife, Esther Auraham. It has been established some twenty years, and takes under its shelter the children of Nestorian, and even Armenian, parentage. It is considered, however, a refuge for Nestorian orphans from the border mountains.

Deacon Auraham has devoted his life and means to the institution, and has been able to interest many friends in England, whose subscriptions to this good and useful work are not lacking.

The children are taught to do the daily work which they would have had to perform under their parents' care, and they are therefore, on leaving the institution, ready for the life before them.

I visited Göktepa, situated on one of the principal ash-heaps or cemeteries of the fire-worshippers, and was much pleased at the healthy look of the children, both male and female, and about eighty in number, who were all occupied, under Mrs. Auraham's supervision, in sawing the winter's wood supply, cleaning the wheat which was to maintain them, according to their sex, and other useful occupations.

The Germans possess a similar institution, but it only receives orphan girls of the Nestorian faith. It has only just been established by a German philanthropic Society, and shelters some thirty girls and a few boys. This institution is managed by a German lady, Fraulein Paulatt.

The Victims of Turkish Oppression.

Owing to the continued vexations and persecution of the Turkish Government and its officials, great numbers of the Christians established in the large and fertile plain of Gawar (it is some 15 to 20 miles in length and breadth, and in shape somewhat resembling the African continent), were obliged to take refuge in Persian territory.

The remainder, having held on as long as they could to their penates, were at last forced, at the time of the massacres, to rejoin their brethren in Urumiah. This

migration spelt ruin to all and the total destruction of the agricultural and material wealth of the plain.

Some 2,000 of these people, owing to the difficulties encountered in finding pasture in Urumiah for their flocks, which were daily being reduced by hunger and robbery, and sorely pressed by other circumstances, returned to their old homes. Here, amid the general devastation, they have not been allowed to rebuild their houses or take up their previous labours, with out paying heavy tolls to the avidity of the Turkish authorities, and without submitting to every annoyance and exaction from the surrounding Kurds, [illegible] upon them by the famous, or rather not pious, Chief Sheikh Sadik.*

They have been obliged to pay arrears of all taxes just as if they had not left the country, and [illegible] are assessed at 2 [illegible] ahead, an amount only paid in the past by [illegible].

The total number of Syrian [illegible] are said to amount to 2,000. Many of these people, who had enjoyed considerable means in their own country at one time, [illegible] ashamed to beg for alms, and would perish were it not for the kindly and [illegible] afforded them by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission.

I have, &c.

[illegible]

No. 76

[illegible]

(Separate.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed H[illegible] respect to the massacre of nine Armenian travellers by the Governor of Khoi and Salmas, the Z[illegible] el-Mulk.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 76

[illegible]

(Separate.)

Sir, *Kalassai, Salmas, November 4, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour, with reference to my telegram of the 31st ultimo regarding the massacre of nine Armenians by the forces of the Governor of Khoi and of this district, "Zerghanm-el-Mulk," to give the details which have reached me of this horrible attack upon an wholesale massacre of apparently harmless Armenians.

On the 24th ultimo, some twelve Armenians, of whom only six [illegible] arms, and who established custom in this country, came to "Mirdik," [illegible] who have been continually harassed on the subject of the revolutionists, and have had to pay large sums to satisfy the greed of the Governor. [illegible] twelve men, then retired [illegible] vineyard, where the [illegible]

Here they were followed, in the early morning, by the Governor's forces. Two of them, perceiving that there would be no chance of life with the Persians, managed to get away by flight, but the remaining ten took refuge in a mud tower, from the top of which they dropped their guns and made, according to eye-witnesses,† unmistakable signs of surrender.

These appeals were not taken [illegible] Persian and Kurdish rabble, who [illegible] had been their [illegible] at the tower.

* This is the man who [illegible] Gawar [illegible] Persian [illegible] Governor [illegible] despatch No. 25 [illegible] Ed.

† Subsequently [illegible] Kurds [illegible] the villages of Mirdik [illegible] Ed.

[illegible]—C. G. W.

[illegible]

ran up, closed with their unresisting victims, and there and then decapitated eight of them, one man being spared and reserved to be sent to Tabreez as a trophy of victory.

The people who laid out and buried the headless bodies* declare that there were no bullet-marks upon them, therefore any reports by native authorities of a desperate defence or any resistance of less than a dozen men, of whom only six carried guns, against nearly 700 Persian warriors, are pure inventions.

The act of the Governor or his deputy in this matter is simply a disgrace to humanity, for there was no proof asked or given of their victims being disturbers of the peace,† or revolutionists, and they were destroyed like vermin in a trap.

Many Mussulmans, both in Urmi and here, have expressed their horror of this cold-blooded massacre, and they, as well as the Christians, fear the consequences which may arise from reprisals on the part of enraged Armenians of the Revolutionary Societies.

It is reported that honours‡ have already been showered by the central authorities upon the "Zerghaum-el-Mulk" for an act which, after careful investigation, I can only speak of as most barbarous and a disgrace to humanity and the Persian Government.

Hundreds of Armenians have been obliged, by continual oppression and every extortion during the last two or more years, to abandon the country.

Many of these people were, and are, men of consideration and wealth, and I am, even now, writing from a strongly built, fine, and well-found house belonging to one of them who, owing to the moral tortures practised upon him by his native protectors, abandoned everything and retired to Russia.

As time is pressing and delay in bringing this matter before your Excellency may entail all sorts of complications,§ I send this report separate from those I have made during my stay in these parts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 77.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

My Lord, *Kalassar, Salmas, November 5, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject of the visit paid to me by the Governor of Khoi and Salmas, and the conversation which took place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 77.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

Sir, *Kalassar, Salmas, November 5, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I received the visit this morning of the Zerghaum-el-Mulk, who offered me the usual compliments and welcome to Salmas.

In the course of conversation, whilst I was deploring the hard times, the lack of the customary rains, high price of grain, and the anxieties for the future expressed on all sides, his Excellency stated that the Persian nation had carried on since ancient times under good and bad circumstances, the apathy of the authorities, and the intrigues of the population, and would probably continue to exist under the same circumstances during the coming ages.

To this I could only reply that slumbering nations could not exist much longer in our days, owing to the activity and expansion of friendly or adverse neighbours

[illegible] oath.—C. G. W.

† [illegible] that three of these people were alone ex-revolutionists who were [illegible]

‡ The Governor has not [illegible] forgotten to send gifts to the Emir Nizam, just after the event, and has [illegible] telegraph.—C. G. W.

§ [illegible] authorities may do next, although it is publicly stated that my arrival [illegible] C. G. W.

whose own necessities would force them to intervene in many ways to remedy matters.

That it was the authorities and officials of a country, and especially in the case of Persia, which demoralized the people by extortions and general disregard for all equity and justice rather than the people their Government.

This statement of mine seemed to rouse his Excellency, who wished to know whether I was alluding to any of his acts, but as there were many people present I replied that I had only answered his observations and had spoken in general terms, although, bearing in mind the things which had come to my knowledge, he was at liberty to take such share of my words as he might think applied to him.

Here his Excellency called a native doctor of the Presbyterian persuasion to his side, and on the plea of a sudden bad headache requested some medicine. A sedative pill having been administered the conversation proceeded on general topics until his Excellency's departure.

As his Excellency had refrained from alluding to the slaughter of less than a dozen men by the overwhelming numbers under his orders,* I did not open the subject, for I had already sufficient evidence in the matter to have given his Excellency something more serious than a pain in his head.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 78.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 5.)

(No. 16.)
My Lord, *Kalassar, Salmas, November 7, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran on the subject of the unfortunate state of affairs prevailing in Salmas plain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Kalassar, Salmas, November 7, 1898.*

AS my telegrams will show, I have stopped here on my way to Tabreez in order to obtain further details of the horrible massacre of Armenian travellers at Mahlam,† already reported to your Excellency by telegram, as well as owing to the instances of the people who felt persuaded that my presence among them for a few days would put a check to further displays of ferocity on the part of the Governor of Khoi and Salmas, whereby matters might calm down somewhat, and a breathing space be allowed the unfortunate people owing obedience to Persian authority in these parts.

The plain of Salmas is backed by its own mountains and those of Khoi, and its lower part abuts upon the north-eastern portion of the large expanse of salt water—the Lake of Urmi.

Some hundred villages, inhabited by some 45,000 people,‡ break the monotony of the plain with luxurious plantations of trees and verdure, and all are watered by the swift-flowing River Zola.

It is the stronghold of Armenians in Northern Persia.

They are mostly agriculturists, but there are [illegible] wealthy people among them possessing well-kept properties and houses, who trade and do banking business with Russia and other lands.

The capital, Dilman, is, as I have already stated, inhabited by Mussulmans, and

* See my telegrams of the 3rd October and 5th November, 1898.

† See my [illegible] 1898.

‡ Mahommedans, 30,000; Armenians, 12,000 to 14,000; Nestorians, 3,500.

presents the usual broken-down, poverty-and filthy appearance [illegible] Christian communities, whilst the neat-looking, well-repaired mud walls of tenements at once proclaim the habitations of Christians.

Some of the residences of the wealthier Christian classes cover, with their entrances and yards, several acres of ground.

The higher portion of the plain is alone cultivated, as the lower is drenched with the saline influences of the lake. This last part, however, carries sufficient pasturage for cattle of all kinds.

Grain is scarce this year in Salmas plain, the load of 10 bushels costing 9 tomans, or over three times its value at other seasons. This is due partly to the fact that, as in Urumiah, the crops were for various seasons not so abundant as [illegible] prevailing scarcity is the gathering in and exportation of grain by functionaries and wealthy proprietors, in total disregard of the existing prohibition.

The doings of the Armenian revolutionary parties during the last four years, as well as the general oppression exercised on any pretext by a corrupt and imbecile Administration, have brought unrest, anxiety, and despair in their train, tending to the depopulation by flight of the best part of the people, and consequent ruin of a well-favoured district.

Could the Mohammedan population replace the energy and knowledge of the departing Armenians, one could understand the extraordinary actions of the Persian authorities; but from what I have heard and seen of the slovenliness of the former, aided and abetted by their usual fatalism, this cannot be. Once, therefore, the Armenians departed, the Christian peasantry reduced to penury, the district would be utterly ruined.

The insane and unprecedented slaughter of a few travelling Armenians, just carried out by the Governor's orders, has shocked both Mussulmans and Christians, for it appears to them that a door has been opened to all kinds of inquisitions, molestations, and outrages on the part of their authorities, for the sole object of enriching themselves [illegible] except such as are caused by their own stupidity and corruption.

Djellar Kh[illegible] rebel to the Persian Government, has been charged by the Zerghamm-ud-Mulk to [illegible] for Armenians, and he is now parading the villages, to the terror and loss of their inhabitants, with well-armed and mounted Kurdish robbers.

Unless the Central Government [illegible] Salmas, and checks the evil deeds and dispositions of its functionaries, acts will shortly be committed which will not fail to call in something stronger than friendly intervention on the part of powerful neighbours.

On every side it is one continuous tale of worries and sorrows on the part of Mussulmans as well as Christians, most distressful to hear, inasmuch as it is almost hopeless to expect of any remedy, under existing circumstances in Persia, being undertaken to save the situation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL C. WRAY

No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marq[illegible]

(No. 628.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November 29, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consular officer at Erzeroum, relative to the strained relations existing between the Vali and the Military Commandant of the vilayet.

The reports sent by Her Majesty's Consular officers in Asia Minor for years past have given very numerous instances of a similar situation in other cases.

The real government of the country appears to be in the hands of the military authorities, who are vigorously supported by the Palace in the policy of thwarting the civil officials.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR

Inclosure in No. 79.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

Erzeroum, November 14, 1898.

Sir,

I HAVE received further information from our Dragoman at Bitlis up to the 8th instant, which does not mention any massacre in the town of Bitlis, but which leads me to apprehend a disturbed time in those parts until heavy snow impedes general communication about a month hence.

The Turkish population is excited.

Amongst the band of revolutionary Armenians, headed by Serop, which started this disturbance, one Armenian had lately come from Russia.

On taking over charge of this important frontier post, it appears to me of importance to mention the following matter to your Excellency:—

The Governor-General of this province, Raouf Pasha, is an excellent Governor.

Mehmet Ali Pasha, the Military Commandant, is a good soldier, and he appears to be anxious to be on friendly terms with us, but this must not lead us to the fact that he is one of the Muchir (Zekki Pasha's) followers, and therefore on very friendly terms with the Kurds. He is on extremely bad terms with Raouf Pasha. It follows, therefore, that when the Kurds commit depredations on the Turkish and Armenian rural population, and Raouf Pasha desires their punishment, Mehmet Ali Pasha, under orders, no doubt, from Zekki Pasha, who befriends the Kurds, does not exercise much pressure through the punitive measures resorted to by his soldiers.

The result is that the Kurds are now doing very much what they please, and if they are not more aggressive, it is owing to the fear entertained by Zekki Pasha and Mehmet Pasha of adverse reports on the part of Raouf Pasha.

The matter has been rendered more serious owing to certain friction, on the subject of finance, between the civil and military authorities, and Raouf and Mehmet Ali are now no longer on speaking terms. This gives rise to a situation which may ultimately become most serious, should it continue, for the Kurds, sure of secret support from the military heads, may break out any day into open insurrection. As it is, they are all armed to the teeth, carrying good European rifles, although certainly of a somewhat old pattern, and three or four belts filled with rifle cartridges, although it is against the law to go armed.

They pull up whom they will on the highways, and nothing is said or done to them.

Into many districts Government officials dare not penetrate.

As Zekki Pasha is still supposed to have considerable Palace influence, perhaps through fear from his very strong position in these parts, it appears to be but a question of time until Raouf Pasha goes to the wall in his quarrel with Mehmet Ali Pasha, and I should not be surprised any day to hear of his resignation. He would be a very serious loss, as the Kurds would then become masters of the situation. It is for this reason that I am desirous of endeavouring to bring Raouf and Mehmet Pashas together again, and of patching up this regrettable and foolish state of friction. As a new comer, impartial to both, I may be fortunate enough to bring about this happy result, and I am now considering the best means to be adopted. I shall report again, in due course, to your Excellency on this important subject.

In the meantime, I trust that Raouf Pasha may be accorded all possible support, should his departure be spoken of.

I propose submitting shortly a general report on the subject of the Hamidieh cavalry, both with reference to the general Kurdish question as well as on their value purely from a military point of view.

I am establishing channels of communication throughout my Consular district similar to those I had at Adana, in order to make certain of the earliest and most accurate information reaching me on all subjects of importance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul.

No. 80.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 12.*)

(No. 638.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 7, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 603 of the 16th ultimo, reporting the news which had reached me as to the difficulties of the Turkish troops in the Yemen, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Turkish press has published a telegram from the Vali of Yemen announcing the capture of Shahit and Fasih (in the neighbourhood of Qufl) by the Turkish forces.

This news has been confirmed by the Minister of War in conversation with M. Marinitsch. His Excellency stated that the Commander-in-chief of the 7th Army Corps, at the head of a division consisting of sixteen battalions, attacked the rebels at their head-quarters and routed them with comparatively small loss. This victory, said his Excellency, secured the military occupation of Hadjeh and Hadjur, and the strongholds of the Bedouin Arabs at Shamil, as well as the chief positions in the district of Qufl.

These places are situated east of Loheia, in the district where the rebellion first broke out. Their occupation does not imply that the rising of the tribes between Sana and Hodeida, or in the southern districts, has been quelled. For this purpose, the Turkish Government will have to make more serious sacrifices, especially in view of the entire absence of transport.

I hope soon to be in a position to furnish your Lordship with fuller information as to these districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 81.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 12.*)

(No. 640.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 8, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to communicate to your Lordship Dr. Belek's report of the armed attack made upon him in the harbour of Van by Hamidieh Kurds.

As already reported to your Lordship, I instructed Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, at the special request of the German Embassy, to keep me fully informed of the steps which might be taken to carry out the promise made by the Sultan to the German Ambassador that the criminals should be brought to justice, and that compensation would be given to Dr. Belek.

From the reports which I have since received from Van it would appear that the Vali sent out an officer and fifty men to capture Dr. Belek's assailants, but without result. Hussein Pasha (of whose complicity in the assault there seems to be no doubt) was reported to have telegraphed to Zeki Pasha (the Commander of the 4th Army Corps, and one of the chief organizers of the Hamidieh cavalry) asking whether the guilty parties should be given up. At the same time, efforts were made to throw the blame for the assault on an enemy of Hussein, Kassim Pasha, who fled, in consequence, to Persia. The Vali showed himself willing to do his best to arrest the criminals, but without the support of Zeki Pasha he appears to be helpless. He even ordered the arrest of Hussein with that of Timur, another Hamidieh leader, but his orders were not carried out, and it is plain that he is quite powerless against the Kurds, and that until Hussein Pasha is removed from the district no decisive step will be taken to exact punishment for this or any other crime committed by the Hamidieh cavalry.

Zeki Pasha enjoys considerable influence at the Palace, and has systematically opposed successive Valis in their endeavours to render the Hamidieh cavalry amenable to the ordinary law.

With reference to Timur and Hussein Pashas, I have the honour to inclose copy of a Memorandum prepared by Captain Elliot, from which it appears that, having no more money to bribe with, there is a possibility that Hussein will be brought to justice.

It would appear, moreover, from a notice published in the press to the effect that except in the case of persons originally enrolled in the Hamidieh cavalry, service in that force will not for the future be counted as regular military service, that the Turkish Government is making some efforts to check the license of these irregular bands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 81.

Memorandum on Captain Maunsell's telegram from Van, dated November 27, 1898.

HUSSEIN PASHA quarrelled with the Mushir, Zeki Pasha, about the beginning of the year. I do not think it likely that the latter will do much to befriend Timur, the more so as he finds his own position somewhat delicate.

Hussein Pasha has doubtless been put to great expense of late (I mean his visit to Constantinople), and this fresh trouble will possibly tax his resources pretty severely, as he has squeezed all he can out of Armenians and Kurds in his district, and cannot have much to fall back on when his present supplies give out. He will, as a matter of course, lose his friends with the power to pay them. As regards the state of his finances, I can merely conjecture, but he has been grinding the people of his district very hard this year, which seems to indicate that he is in need of funds.

His removal is a *sine qua non* if justice is to be expected, and would be an immense boon appreciated not only by the wretched Armenians, but by the Turks and all the Kurds but perhaps his own immediate followers. It would rather demand by its necessity of indicating the inviolability not only of Consuls but any European.

He should, however, be brought to Van, or, better still, exiled by Administrative Decree, as was decided on about the beginning of this year or the end of last.

Hadji Timur Pasha is a notorious bad character of that district. He is not so bad, however, as Hussein nor Emin Pashas. He is an enemy of Hussein Pasha's, who murdered two of his brothers a few years ago, and is now seeking to fix the attack on Dr. Belek on his son. Kassim Bey, or Talkan, was doing so when I left Van.

When I crossed the Moglai Plain about the 7th November I heard that Kassim Bey had passed a day or two previously on his way to Persia.

If the present opportunity could be made use of to get rid of the scourge of the three Pashas—Hussein, Emin, and last and least Hadji Timur—as was decided on a few months ago, it would be an immense benefit not only to the people, but to the Turkish Government.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT, *Captain, R.E., late Vice-Consul, Van.*

Constantinople, November 30, 1898.

No. 82.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 12.*)

(No. 642.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 8, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 591 of the 29th ultimo relative to Armenian matters and the Erzeroum demonstration, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consulate at Erzeroum on the subject of the recent disturbances at Bitlis, together with a Memorandum drawn up at my request by Captain Elliot, who has just returned from Van.

Your Lordship will observe that Captain Elliot takes a somewhat different view to Major Massy, who attributes the disturbances to Russian revolutionary agents.

In Captain Elliot's opinion the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Armenian movement is rather hostile than otherwise, though the minor officials, who are mostly Armenians, may connive at the incursions. In his opinion, until the railway-

bridge across the Aras is completed, and railway communication to the district east of the plateau of Van is in working order, the Russian Government will have no interest in fomenting a revolutionary movement on a large scale, although they may not be averse to a continuance of the anarchic condition of things now existing in the north-east of Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 82.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 21, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to report as follows the substance of the information received this day from our Dragoman at Bitlis:—

"The town is quiet now; but in the villages the Kurds are plundering, although the Government tries to stop them.

"The revolutionists are free still, and increase in number. They have now four leaders, one Serop, of Akhlat Caza, near Bitlis. The rest are Russian Armenians; one lately came from Russia, the other two, who were in other parts of the vilayet for a year past, have now approached Bitlis. I hear they expect more bands from Russia. I shall give further information by next post."

This report is somewhat vague, giving no numbers or very exact details. I am instructing this Dragoman as to the particulars which should be embraced in his reports, and I trust that I may be able to give your Excellency more exact details in future.

In conversation with the Governor-General of Erzeroum this day his Excellency expressed himself as very despondent on the prospects of quiet and security, if not for the near future, at least in the spring, with the reopening of communications. He says that the Kurds, under existing circumstances, are masters of the situation, and all kinds of excesses are to be feared. Moreover, he added, Russia desires that the disturbed state should continue in these parts, and she is certain to keep on providing funds and leaders for these foolish revolutionary bands.

Within 7 or 8 miles of Erzeroum part of a large caravan to Persia was plundered three or four days ago, some bales of English goods being carried off. In speaking of this to the Governor-General, while assuring me of his regret, and that all possible steps for the recovery of the goods had been taken, he said he had but little hope of this being effected. He knew what tribe had committed the robbery, but as the Kurds were practically independent of proper control, it would be well nigh impossible to follow them up through their own territory.

With reference to this unsatisfactory state of affairs, I would respectfully suggest that no action be taken at present. The situation does not appear to be much more serious than usual of late; it is practically normal, and heavy snow having now fallen, we may hope for a comparatively undisturbed spell of several months. Moreover, any action might render more acute the present strained relations between the civil and military authorities, as each would cast the blame on the other.

I mention it chiefly as casting an interesting light on the Kurdish question, in which your Excellency, I am sure, takes a keen interest and feeling, as I do, that the present situation in Kurdistan is likely to develop, sooner or later, into one of the most eventful in the fate of this Empire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul.

Inclosure 2 in No. 82.

Major Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 29.)
Sir, [illegible], *November* 28, 1898.

I HAVE received further information of the recent disturbances at Bitlis, which practically confirms what I have already reported to your Excellency on this subject.

It would appear that the whole matter was started by Russian revolutionary

Armenians, who were joined by some local Armenian outlaws. A little more, and a massacre would have taken place in Bitlis, but Ali Pasha, the Military Commandant, and the Wali appear to have behaved well, and they together averted this. The Kaimakam of Akhlat Caza also appears to have behaved well. The Kurds then joined in pillaging several villages and carrying off all the live-stock.

These regrettable occurrences are to be ascribed to these Russian revolutionary agents, who had hoped to raise a massacre on a large scale.

Several caravans have been plundered during the last fortnight not far from Bitlis by the Hamidieh cavalry of the Hassananle tribe, of Malazgird. No punishment is meted out to these gentlemen owing to friction between the military and civil authorities, and to their indulgent treatment by Zeki Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul.

Inclosure 3 in No. 82.

Memorandum respecting Correspondence regarding Incursions of Armenians from Russia.

AS far as I am able to judge, these incursions have been exaggerated. The Turkish authorities are very glad to be able to plead them as an excuse for misgovernment and persecution, more particularly for their indifference and supineness in taking in hand the Kurds, who are rendering existence unendurable if not impossible for the Armenian peasantry by their continued robberies and exactions.

It is probable that small bands have crossed the frontier, but I do not think any general movement is in contemplation by the Armenian Revolutionary Committees. The movement does not find much sympathy among the bulk of the people, who desire to live in peace, and if the Government would ensure them protection, they would not hesitate to report to the authorities the presence of Revolutionists among them. These men in the summer are able to live on the mountains, but the supply of food they can carry is necessarily limited. Thus, even at the most favourable time of year, they are dependent on the villagers for the means of existence, and, if these are not to be trusted, it is impossible for them to make a long stay over the frontier.

As the incident in connection with the finding of arms at Kordzot, near Van, terminated in the manner that appeared to me most satisfactory, I did not consider it necessary to trouble Her Majesty's Ambassador with the details of a story that was of importance is to be attached to Revolutionary movements in those districts and also how easy it is to settle matters without causing a disturbance, if only a little ordinary common sense and moderation be exercised by the Turkish authorities.

A German traveller, named Rohrbach, and his wife came to Van from Russia to inspect the work of the American Missions in Turkey. I was not in Van while he was there; it was some time in September, as far as I can recollect. On my return, I heard that his Dragoman, an Armenian, whom he had picked up in the Caucasus, had suddenly disappeared while the Rohrbachs were in Van and guests of the Vali, Tahir Pasha; also that this man was wanted by the police as a suspicious character.

I looked on this at first as an attempt by the police to recommence bullying the Armenians, so I went and saw the Vali about it. He told me that the man's passport was all right, and that it was his own conduct in suddenly disappearing that first gave rise to suspicion. I also heard from another quarter that the police knew where he was, but did not want to lay hands on him for the moment as they feared resistance and a consequent risk of disturbance. A few days after he was arrested and brought before the Vali, who, as he informed me, ordered the escort out of the room and spoke to the man alone. He at first gave himself out as a Persian subject, but his pronunciation made it clear to Tahir Pasha that he was an Ottoman subject. Tahir Pasha first asked him if the police had robbed or beaten him. He replied that they had not. Eventually he admitted he was an Ottoman subject and that he had come to Van to ascertain the disposition of the people there towards the Revolutionary movement and to organize a Tashnak (I think) Committee. He was told that if he spoke the truth and his statements were verified, pardon for him would be applied for, otherwise he might expect unpleasantness.

As a result, I believe, but my memory may be at fault, of his revelations several [illegible] to go [illegible] of a villager of Menaks, who, on being subjected to a [illegible]

band of twenty-five. One of these had fallen sick, seven had returned, and owing to other casualties about fourteen only remained: the figures I give from memory and am not certain of. On their way in they had killed a Kurd or two. They left the arms they were bringing in at Kordzot, near Perigri, about 14 hours distant from Van, and came into the gardens. The Menkshi, on being questioned privately by the Vali, divulged where the arms had been hidden, and was sent out with some police officers and mounted men to point out the place. All the arms were found, many of them pretty badly rusted. I forgot the numbers, but they were Berdans, Martinis, and the present Russian magazine rifle. There were also bandoliers with cartridges, haversacks, water-bottles, and a sort of uniform cap affected by the revolutionists. The Vali sent for samples from the arsenal to show me. He had previously shown them to the Russian Vice-Consul, who had taken the numbers of the rifles. Of the fourteen (?) who had come over all but three or four were arrested about the time I speak of. The Vali told me that he was convinced that the people did not sympathize with their objects, that he was suspicious of two or three Armenians, but was not going to take any further steps for the present. One of the suspicious characters, he said, was his own servant.

It is worthy of note that the party sent to Kordzot, among whom were several notorious rascals, behaved in a perfectly correct manner and gave no cause for complaint, thanks to the strict orders Tahir Pasha had given them before starting to be careful. Thus this attempt to re-establish a Tashnak (or Huntchak, I am not now certain which) Committee in Van failed altogether of its object, and the Armenians saw they could trust the Vali to protect them from outrage, provided they kept clear of the revolutionists.

Tahir Pasha displayed judgment and common sense in dealing with this matter. He has doubtless orders to keep the vilayet quiet. He informed me that he had so far found Zeki Pasha willing to meet his views in everything.

The outcry against the Mushir, though it did not procure his removal, has not been altogether without results.

I have been told that Tahir Pasha is "gevshek," *i.e.*, lacks firmness. It is not improbable that he is, and in dealing with the Kurdish question which is now very much to the fore in Van, I fear he may fail in this most requisite qualification. The difficult position of any provincial Governor in face of Palace intrigues must, however, be borne in mind.

As regards the attitude of the Russian authorities towards these incursions, I cannot think that they in any way connive at or sanction them, at any rate not the higher authorities. Armenians are disliked in the Caucasus by the Government, and, I think, by the people.

It is not likely that such unreliable instruments would be made use of for political purposes, the more so as Russia evidently does not want matters precipitated in that quarter. Her railways to the frontier are not completed and will not be for another two or three years. It is intended to bridge the Aras at Ialfa, and by that time, no doubt, it will be announced that they have obtained railway Concessions in Azarbijan. When Azarbijan has been absorbed, or when these railways are complete, Russia will be ready for the next forward move towards the Gulf on the one side and the plains of Mesopotamia and the banks of the Tigris on the other, her position then enabling her to turn the flank of the mountains forming the southern wall of the Armenian plateau.

It can hardly be anticipated that before this time the state of Turkey will have ceased to afford pretexts for interference. It rather looks as if before then interference of some sort will be imperatively necessary.

It may appear at first sight strange that armed bands of revolutionists can march at will across the frontier into Turkey. It must, however, be remembered that Russia has a very large open land frontier, and to keep small parties of individuals from slipping across this is exceedingly difficult. The numbers of these bands are generally ridiculously exaggerated. They usually consist of ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty men, and they pick up a few villagers sometimes as they go along. That hundreds of men collect in any one place I do not believe.

I think it, however, likely that the petty officials on the frontier, though not liking Armenians very much,* sympathize with their wrongs and feel naturally indignant when they hear the stories of suffering and ill-treatment that they are constantly doing from refugees from Turkey. They are thus perhaps not over zealous when they hear that parties of Armenians are about to cross the frontier to try and get even with the Kurds.

* See Note at end.

Another point too is that the Armenian community, though not favourably regarded, has an influence in the Caucasus that money with energy to back it can always command, and they doubtless find means of preventing the police in Tiflis and elsewhere from being unnecessarily vigilant.

I think too that the power and ability of the Russian Government and Russian officials are over-estimated. The present state of the Caucasus, where travelling on the post roads is, at times, most unsafe, is such as would not long be tolerated on our Indian frontiers, where the re-sources at the disposal of our officers are less, and the inhabitants every bit as turbulent, and the country as difficult.

It is with deference that I submit these views which I have been lead to form by conversation with Russians (colleagues and others), and what I saw and heard whilst travelling in Turkey, Persia, and the Caucasus.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT, *Captain, R.E., late Vice-Consul, Van.*

Constantinople, November 30, 1898.

Note.—Since writing the above, I noticed an article in the "Levant Herald" of the 30th November (p. 1), headed "Brigandage in the Caucasus," which fully bears out this statement.

G. S. E.

December 1, 1898.

Captain Elliot might have added that a large number of the smaller police officials of the Caucasus are Armenians, and in sympathy with revolutionary movements in Turkey. With regard to the question of connivance, it is, of course, true that it would be extremely difficult to prevent small Armenian bands from crossing so long and difficult a land frontier, but the smuggling of Russian military rifles and the collection of funds for revolutionary purposes in Russian territory are points deserving of explanation.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

Constantinople, December 2, 1898.

No. 83.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 109.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 12, 1898.

I HAVE received from Mr. Wood a copy of his despatch to you of the 4th ultimo, reporting the circumstances of the massacre of nine Armenians by the forces of the Governor of Khoi and Salmas.

If you have not already done so, I request that you will call the attention of the Persian Government to the conduct of Zergaum el Mulk on this occasion.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 84.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 19.)

(No. 617.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 12, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 505 of the 25th September last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship a further despatch on the subject of the Russian and French Missions to the Nestorians.

The French Mission does not appear to have the success which was hoped for. The Russian Mission is established at Urmia, across the Persian frontier, and is reported to be steadily but slowly making converts.

Captain Maunsell points out the evident advantage which would accrue to the

Russians if the Nestorians, who are a warlike people, able to hold their own against the Kurds, were to be gained over to the Orthodox faith.

These people hold the mountain district between the Bitlis and Rania Passes, through one or other of which (in Captain Maunsell's opinion the latter) must run the Russian line of communication between Transcaucasia and Mesopotamia.

I have communicated a copy of Captain Maunsell's despatch to Sir M. Durand.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Captain Maunsell to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Van, November* 23, 1898.

I HAVE the honour to report, in continuation of Captain Elliot's despatch No. 25 of the 13th October last, regarding Russian religious Missions to the Nestorians of Urmia, that the priests are now installed in Urmia, and are active in enrolling the names of those who wish to become Orthodox.

The Mission consists of three members (one priest, one monk, and one deacon), Mar Yonan, and some Syrian adherents of last year; much smaller than the large Mission with resident Consul which was hoped for by the Syrians, and promised last autumn year.

The Mission are not making much stir, but confine themselves to steady work. There are, of course, difficulties with the Moslems, caused by the over-elation of the Syrians at receiving what they think is Russian protection, and considerable demands have been made on their Consul at Tabreez.

It is said they are provided with money to build two churches: one in Urmia and another in Superghan, the centre of the Nazluchai district, and the seat of Maryonan, a Bishop whom they won over last year, and who is with them now.

They do not intend to make the conversion to the Orthodox religion too suddenly, as they accept part of the Nestorian rites and books.

They have not yet commenced operations in Turkey, but I have no doubt they intend doing so directly their position at Urmia is a little more secure.

In connection with this question, M. Macfsky, the Russian Vice-Consul of Van, immediately on his return from leave in Russia a month ago, left for a tour in the Nestorian districts south-east of Julamerk, with a view of investigating the proceedings of the French priests from Van who were engaged in converting the Nestorians to Roman Catholicism. He appears to have travelled about the neighbourhood mentioned, and no doubt took steps to prepare for the advent of the Urmia Mission among the tribes. On returning here a week ago, and only waiting two days, he left again for Bitlis to inquire into the recent disturbances and extermination of a band of Russian Armenians there.

The results of the French Mission, consisting of Père de France from here, and Père Jacques from Mosul, have not been very successful, and they have not made many converts.

They commenced by winning over Nimrud, a cousin of Mar Shimun, a most plausible scoundrel, who certainly did a great deal of mischief among these ignorant mountaineers.

Thinking themselves now under French protection, about the middle of September, the men of Tiari district raided a number of sheep from Hajji Agha, a Hartoshi nomad Kurd, then in the mountains west of Lewin.

The latter promptly retaliated by pillaging and burning seven villages of the Lewin district, killing altogether fourteen persons, mostly old women and children, who could not escape from the flames.

There is no doubt that the Tiari men were brought in by those of Lewin at Nimrud's instance to raid Hajji Agha's sheep.

The Mutessarif of Bashkala and Mar Shimun both went to Lewin and spent some time investigating, one good result being that Nimrud was cast into prison, where he still remains.

Zekki Pasha, the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps at Erzingan, interfered to protect Hajji Agha, he being a Hamidié officer of a recently raised regiment.

Zekki Pasha is said to have telegraphed to the Mutessarif as follow:—

"The rights of officers must be respected. You will know what to do."

Hajji Agha received no punishment, and left for his winter quarters in the Tigris Basin.

I may add that in this and in other matters Mar Shimun has been receiving the support of the Government, although they have been oppressive regarding the collection of tribute from the villages.

I have written to Mr. Browne at Kochannes, informing him that I shall always be willing to support Mar Shimun with the Vali of Van; but that, in face of Russian and French encroachments, he must show more energy in supporting the rights of his people, and less timidity in approaching Government officials.

In connection with the increasing advance of Russian influence in the Persian Province of Azerbaijan, I venture to put forward the following remarks on the objects of such a scheme.

The ulterior aim of Russian advances in these countries may be assumed to be an effort to obtain a foothold at the head of the Persian Gulf, moving by the "line of least resistance" to attain such an object.

There are only two routes by which they can move from the Trans-Caucasus on the head of the Persian Gulf:—

1. By the Bitlis Pass, the Tigris Valley, Mosul, and Bagdad.

2. By the west shore of Lake Urmia, into the upper basin of the Lesser Zab River, down the valley of that stream, by Rania, Keui Sandjak, and Altun Keupri to Bagdad.

To utilize the first route they would have first to defeat the military power of the Turks.

To employ the second they would only have to encounter the feeble military forces of Persia: preparations by means of religious Missions and other diplomatic measures are perhaps easier to carry out in Turkey than in Persia.

When they came to cross the Turkish frontier near Rania, in the Lesser Zab Valley, they would have obtained an important position from which to turn the Turkish defences of the Bitlis Pass, and would probably be able to reach the Tigris without encountering much further opposition, at least from the Turks.

The advantage of having a friendly Nestorian population on their flank in the mountains between the Bitlis and Rania Passes is, of course, obvious.

Both the routes by Bitlis and Rania are practicable for military purposes, and are equally easy.

The mountainous nature of the intervening country precludes passage at other points.

From Erivan to Bagdad by the Bitlis Pass is 795 miles, but the Tigris navigation can be utilized to assist for a considerable distance.

From Erivan to Bagdad by Urmia and Rania is 690 miles,* the Lesser Zab and Tigris Rivers being capable of navigation for a considerable portion of this distance also.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL

No. 85.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 19.)

(No. 651.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 14, 1898.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 615 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I have received a further despatch from Damascus, reporting the official entry of Djevad Pasha, formerly commanding the Turkish troops in Crete, and now Commander of the 5th Army Corps.

His predecessor appears not to have received any other post as yet, which shows the haste with which Djevad Pasha's transfer was proceeded with.

* See Route 108, and Military Report on Turkey in Asia 1894.

I learn that instructions were sent from the Palace to forbid his having any intercourse with the German Emperor. His known freedom of speech and disapproval of the Sultan's policy in Crete are sufficient reasons for this prohibition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 86.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 19.)

(No. 652.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 14, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 601 of the 14th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, stating that Colonel Muzhar Bey, the murderer of Padre Salvatore, who had been appointed Acting Muhafiz at Medina, has been recalled either to Taif or to Mecca.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 86.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 122.)
Sir, *Jeddah, November 28, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 110, Confidential, of the 14th ultimo, announcing the departure of Colonel Muzhar Bey to take up temporarily an appointment at Medina, I have the honour to report that Colonel Ali Bey, Commandant of the troops at Jeddah, was sent from here to supersede his fellow officer on the 19th instant.

It appears certain that Colonel Muzhar Bey was recalled forthwith, and ordered to return to Taif or Mecca as before.

The new Muhafiz for Medina may, probably, have been already appointed, and the Farik, Osman Pasha, has arrived here to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 87.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 27.)

(No. 658.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 21, 1898.*

IN my predecessor's despatch No. 264 of the 15th April, 1897, the circumstances were related under which a French Company obtained a concession for a railway from Damascus to Biredjik, with a kilometric guarantee at the rate of 520*l.* a kilometre. As Sir Philip Currie informed your Lordship, the Turkish Government when they had made themselves better acquainted with the conditions of the enterprise refused to confirm the concession, and as compensation were forced by the French Government to pay the Company an annual sum guaranteed on the tithes of the district.

On the 12th instant Tewfik Pasha, in the course of a desultory conversation, informed me at length of the details of this transaction. The sum, he said, which the Government had been forced to pay was £ T. 35,000 annually for five years, which the French Government insisted on as compensation for the prospective profits which the Company had lost (according to their estimation) by the annulment of the Contract.

His Excellency spoke very sorely of the action of the French Government in this

matter, and characterized their conduct as a monstrous imposition upon a weak Power. A sum of 20,000*l.* would, he said, have been ample compensation for all trouble and expenses incurred by the Company.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 88.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 27.)

(No. 662.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 21, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 638 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting the condition of affairs in the Yemèn.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 88.

Consul Devey to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 126.)
Sir, *Jeddah, December 2, 1898.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 96 of the 24th August, I have the honour to state that the town and neighbourhood of Hodeida appears to be fairly quiet, and the road thence to Sana is open. Uneasiness would seem to have been felt lest troubles should break out in the vicinity of Beit-el-Fakil and in districts east and south of Hodeida, but none have taken place yet, nor, so far as I can judge, is there any real cause for alarm. The tribes of Assir were also half-expected to make some stir in support of the rebels, more particularly perhaps in the neighbourhood of Comfidah, but no such movement has come to my knowledge.

The revolt remains purely local, and has been mainly confined, since the first incident at Hajur, to the vicinity of Kofl, and the mountain country north of Sana.

With respect to the rumour that the Imam Hamid-ud-Din had been allowed time to send in his submission, it would appear that the Turks had been disinclined to carry on a vigorous campaign during the summer, but now that the cool season has begun, they may be adopting a more peremptory course of action. At all events, the Mushir Abdullah Pasha was proceeding to the disturbed districts near Jebel Sada about a month ago, where the troops had surrounded and were attacking a hill fortress, well provisioned and held by a considerable number of Arabs. I also heard at Hodeida that a young Staff Colonel, lately arrived from Constantinople, had been cut off a little while before while going up the country, and suffered a loss of some 200 men. The Circassian General of Brigade, Ahmed, who was sent to the front just after the first disturbance occurred, received a bullet wound some weeks ago, but was not seriously hurt.

With reference to the deportation of a wealthy Arab merchant of Hodeida, El Harazi (*vide* my despatch No 49 of the 10th May), this man remained only a few weeks in Hedjaz, during which time he visited Mecca, and then returned to Hodeida. Vulgar report asserts that he expended some 4,000*l.* in bribes here, and sent 10,000*l.* more to Constantinople. On the 10th ultimo, he had been summoned as a political prisoner once more to Sana; his friends were making pretence of believing that the Vali had merely caused his arrest as a blind, and that the Turks were anxious to treat him well upon arrival at Sana, and avail of his influence among the country people, which is chiefly due to his wealth and large commercial transactions with them.

I regret to draw attention again to the wretched condition of poverty in Yemèn; many districts have been suffering from partial famine for nearly a year past, and cattle have been slaughtered wholesale; of the large stores of grain which have been brought to Hodeida, only a very small proportion has been carried to the distressed districts, owing to the almost total want of transport, and to the disturbed state of the country. No camels can be procured at Hodeida, and the half-famished tribesmen have lately

begun to come in small numbers into the town, where free distributions of food are made two or three times a-week. Steps had been taken for forwarding provisions for the troops from various points on the coast.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 89.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 27.)

(No. 663.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 21, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, respecting the prospect of distress during the winter in that province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 89.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Kharput, December 6, 1898.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the prospect for the winter season in this province is, from accounts received from different sources, unfavourable as regards the condition of the poorer classes, and more especially of those of Armenian nationality.

In the first place the long continued drought, which has now lasted with but little intermission during several months, has brought about a considerable rise in the price of grain and fodder. The scarcity of the supply having been, I regret to say, rendered worse by the action of the tithe-farmers ("multezimler") in agreeing together to buy up the tithes of the different villages at a low rate, each farmer taking a village for himself, knowing that none of his comrades would endeavour to outbid him, and then holding back the grain at the present time so as to raise the price to the public.

The hardships resulting from this scarcity of grain are felt by all but the privileged class referred to, whether Mussulmans or Christians, but in the case of the Armenian population the outlook is still worse, as there is a fear that the authorities will this winter demand payment of the military commutation tax ("bedeli askeri") which, since the recent troubles, has not been enforced, in view of the destitute condition of many of the Armenian peasants.

I am told that if this demand be insisted on, and the authorities accordingly distrain upon the few goods the peasants possess, the suffering must of necessity be very keen, as the latter will in too many cases be on the point of starvation, apart from any demand being made upon them for taxes.

A district which was mentioned to me as being especially in need of indulgence in this respect is that of Charsanjak.

From those who are well acquainted with this district, I learn that the distress this winter is likely to be as keen in intensity as it has been during the past two winters, but it was added that it will not be so wide-spread on this occasion, as not a few of the families then in a state of absolute destitution have been able to recover to some extent from the effects of the raids, and are thus in a condition to meet the difficulties of the winter season.

In view of the probability of continued suffering from want of the necessaries of life in villages, still too numerous, it is perhaps to be regretted that the Relief Association should have decided to withdraw its subventions.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the towns the state of things has improved, and it is in the outlying districts that pressure is most keenly felt.

I venture, accordingly, most respectfully to submit that the issue of instructions from the Central Government to the local authorities to forego the collection of the tax referred to, viz., the "bedeli askeri," from the destitute villages, would confer a boon upon the peasants and probably, in the long run, benefit the authorities themselves, as the villages might thus be enabled to emerge from their present hopeless condition and

rise more rapidly to a state of relative prosperity, which would be the best guarantee for their ability in the future to contribute their share of the taxes required by the Government.

With regard to the district of Charsanjak, which has been recently disturbed by the feuds between the local magnates, Osman Bey and Arslan Bey, reported in my despatch No. 34 of the 26th October last, I am informed that the disputants have again become reconciled, but it was added that the district in question would probably be greatly improved were the rival Beys exiled to another part of the Empire.

As a matter of fact, however, the Central Government seems to have but slight authority in that district, and possibly would be unwilling to put it to the test by the adoption of any measures of that kind.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 90.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 28.)

(No. 18.)
My Lord, *Tabriz, December 10, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch, marked Separate, Kalassar, 4th November, I have the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch and inclosure which I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran, forwarding photographs of the heads of eight of the Armenian travellers who were massacred and then decapitated by the orders of the Governor of Khoi and Salmas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 90.

Consul-General Wood to Sir M. Durand.

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Tabriz, December 10, 1898.*

WITH reference to my despatch of the 4th ultimo, marked "Separate," from Salmas, in which I confirmed the news of the massacre of nine Armenians travellers by the forces of the Governor of Khoi and that district, as already reported by telegrams,* I have now the honour to inclose copies of the photographs of the heads of the unfortunate victims of the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk.†

These photographs were taken, it is said, by the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk immediately after the decapitation had been effected, and I have only been able to obtain them with some difficulty.

All the reports I have received since my return to Tabriz confirm the fact of no resistance having been offered by the victims of the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk. Had the six men, among them who were, as is usual with travellers in this country armed to the teeth chosen to show fight, the tables would undoubtedly have been turned, owing to the great loss of life they would have inflicted upon the armed rabble, led by the Deputy Governor Hadji Ismail Khan.

I am glad to report that shortly after my arrival at Tabriz, I learnt that the heads of the murdered men had been delivered up to the Armenian community.

This reasonable action, which must be due to your Excellency's good offices with the Central Government, has given much satisfaction to the Armenians.

On the other hand, I have had no information as to what has become of the two Armenians, who, perceiving that no mercy was to be expected from the Persians, managed to make their escape from the vineyard, where their companions eventually met their death; nor have I heard of any steps being taken to discover and punish the murderers of the peaceful and much respected man Zaohe Melikian of Mahlam, together with his wife and daughther; a crime which was committed on the same day as the Armenians were slaughtered, whereby the strong suspicious generally

* See Mr. Wood's telegrams to Legation of the 31st October and 5th November, 1898.
† There are only eight heads depicted, as one of the men was not decapitated, being buried with his head, but minus his ears.

entertained in Urumiah and Salmas that their deaths had been brought about by the authorities themselves in order that they might be able to cast a plausible accusation of criminality, hereafter, upon the Armenians, have been much augmented; a combination or purpose on the part of the authorities which my appearance in Salmas, and the consequent uneasy feeling it produced upon the mind or conscience of the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk, may have broken up or caused to be forgotten.

As for the Armenian whose life was spared in order that he should be sent to Tabriz as a trophy of victory, it seems that on arriving here he claimed Turkish protection, and was, therefore, handed over to the Turkish Consul-General, who has forwarded him to Salmas, to be taken by Turkish zaptiehs to Bashkala on Turkish territory.

Honours have been awarded, by telegram, to the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk, as I had reported, but I am glad to say that some of these were eventually withdrawn. I trust, however, that the "sword of honour" which I hear has been awarded him at the request of our Governor-General, the Emir Nizam, will not be allowed to reach his hands or those of the Emir, and, further, that every effort should be made to prevent his return, as Governor, to the scene of one of the most brutal acts which has, so far, disgraced this portion of the Shah's dominions.

Things are quiet, for the present, in the district of Salmas, although the Deputy Governor, Hadji Ismail Khan,* who personally conducted the slaughter of the Armenians, has been left in charge of the Local Government, the Zerghaum-ul-Mulk having been called up to Tabriz, but the Persian officials in those parts have become somewhat uneasy at the view of their actions which my reports have brought about.

From my knowledge and experience the only disturbing elements existing for some time past in Urumiah, Salmas, and even Tabriz, are the incapacity, greed, and general worthlessness of the native functionaries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

P.S. *December* 12.—I have reopened this despatch to report that one of my clerks has seen, and conversed with, one of the two Armenians who escaped from the massacre, and is in disguise in Tabriz.

This man stated that he and his party had no intention of disturbing the public peace, and of exposing, therefore, their co-religionists to further exactions and troubles.

C. G. W.

No. 91.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 30.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December 24, 1898.*

I TRANSMIT to your Lordship herewith a Memorandum drawn up at my desire by Mr. Clive Bigham, Honorary Attaché to this Embassy, on the present political situation in Palestine.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Memorandum by Mr. C. Bigham on the Political Situation in Palestine.

IN the early part of the present month I travelled through Syria and Palestine, following more or less the route taken by His Imperial Majesty the German Emperor.

The condition of the country in its military and commercial aspects has been fully reported on by Her Majesty's Consular officials, but the political situation in the Holy Land, of equal interest and importance, deserves, perhaps, no less attention.

* This individual has also applied for marks of favour for his bravery and devotion to duty and had forwarded a gift of 50 tomans to our Agent for Foreign Affairs here, who, however, sent back the amount with a few straightforward remarks.—C. G. W.

The most active agent without doubt is Russia, and hitherto her efforts have been crowned with such success that with her now rests the political supremacy. The tactics she pursues are mainly concerned with the protection and support of the Orthodox Church, which, nominally directed by Greek Prelates and clergy, draws most of its pilgrims, and, consequently, much of its revenue, from Russia. Nearly 8,000 peasants come yearly to Jerusalem from the vast plains between Moscow and the Black Sea, and as their journey to and from the Holy Land, and their two or three months' sojourn in it, only costs them about 30 roubles (3*l.*) a-head, these numbers annually increase. This very cheap rate is the result of three causes: firstly, the low railway and steam-boat tariffs accorded by the Russian Government to pilgrims; secondly, the abstemious life they lead—each mujik exists for a few kopecks a-day—and, thirdly, the extensive hospitality at Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Jericho afforded by the various Russian hospices, where lodging, medical attendance, religious instruction, and small doles of food and money are given gratis.

The pilgrims are thus free to make their offerings to the Church, in this case represented by the Greek Patriarch.

On the other hand the Hellenes, less numerous, less pious, and more extravagant, do not so readily contribute their obols to the coffers of one of their own nation.

His Beatitude, however, with whom I had a long conversation in Russian, the only foreign language he knew, did not appear to appreciate the increasing generosity of the major, any more than the diminishing piety of the minor, portion of his flock; for the Greek Orthodox Church, he said, was every year naturally becoming more dependent on Russia, and he even went so far as to assure me that its future prosperity would be best secured by the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; but the overpowering friendship of Russia is not only financial. Many of the Bishops, drawn from the black clergy, if not actually educated in Russia, hail from Mount Athos, where, besides the huge monastery of Pantocrator with its 2,000 Muscovite monks, whose likens and carvings penetrate to every part of Orthodox Christendom, each of the many minor Greek foundations has now its few Slav inmates. Here, also, in the month of May I had met a Patriarch, but in retreat, the consequence of a too unbending attitude to the Porte and its advisers.

Panslavism in Macedonia supplements the religious influence of the Holy Mountain, and in the same way Orthodoxy in Palestine is seconded by a racial policy, and of a rather remarkable type. There are, indeed, few Slavs, but there are plenty of Russian subjects, and these are the Astrakenazim Jews, the erstwhile inhabitants of Poland and the Ukraine, who, driven thence by a relentless persecution, find themselves to their astonishment *persona grata* to the Russian Consul-General in Jerusalem. Despite the Regulations of the Turkish Government against Jewish immigration, the influx continues, and the Russians do not omit, by extending their comprehensive protection to the Israelites, to add to their political bow a second string of no mean strength.

The Heterodox faiths also afford considerable scope to the diligence of the supreme Government in St. Petersburgh or of the "Society of Palestine," a missionary patriotic institution directed from Moscow. The Armenian and Abyssinian communities, small in numbers and consequence, may be quickly dismissed. The former are naturally attracted to the Russians by their prestige in Armenia and in the Caucasus and by their own want of a protector, and have possibly been stimulated by the example of the Nestorians in North-Western Persia, who lately went over to the Russian Church *en masse*. The latter have recently discovered that their ritual, in which dancing and the beating of drums are leading feature, is closely akin to that of Moscow, and appear, therefore, only too glad to ally themselves, ecclesiastically, with so powerful a friend. The Russians do not disdain, however, to conciliate both.

But the chief of all the Heterodox Churches is, of course, that of Rome, and for the last few years the Latin influence has been rapidly declining, mainly owing to the masterly inactivity and *laisser-faire* which has been the motto of the French Government. A policy sufficiently ignoble for a country with the traditions of Louis IX and the aspirations of Napoleon, but absolutely pernicious for her unfortunate protégés in the East. Not unconnected with this may be the dwindling prestige of France in the Levant, where her subsidized commerce barely exists, while her language only serves as a means of communication between the Jews of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

At the Agricultural College near Jaffa, founded by M. Crauieux and now supported by the Alliance Israélite, we were not more astonished at the general intelligence and versatility of the students than at the extraordinary facility with which they conversed in French, which is, with Hebrew, their official language. To hear a Jew of Algeria or

Poland discussing the Dual Alliance or anti-Semitism in perfect French afforded food for reflection.

They all appeared to look forward to spending their lives in Palestine, and not one seemed desirous of going back to his parents. Indeed, from all I could gather, the Israelite colonies, poor though they are, are animated by a really fervent religious spirit; and, well adapted as they are by nature to compete with the unstable Syrian or the indolent Arab in agriculture or commerce, they seem likely, at no distant date, to verify Lord Beaconsfield's prophecy, and prove an important factor in the solution of the Eastern question.

For the moment, however, there is no doubt that the political power is all in the hands of Russia, and she is leaving no stone unturned to unearth any claim which may weigh in the scale when she fulfils the general opinion of the country and demands the custody of the Holy Places.

(Signed) CLIVE BIGHAM.

December 24, 1898.

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